

HISTORICAL
& LEGENDS OF
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

ALFRED T. STORY.



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2008 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

HISTORICAL
LEGENDS OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

Historical Legends
OF
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

BY
ALFRED T. STORY,

Author of "Women in the Talmud," etc.

"History to be true must condescend to speak the language of legend.
The belief of the times is part of the record of the times."

NORTHAMPTON: JOHN TAYLOR, 22, GOLD STREET.
LONDON: L. N. FOWLER, IMPERIAL BUILDINGS, LUDGATE
CIRCUS, E.C.

On tow'ds the Midlands now, th' industrious muse doth make
The Northamptonian earth, and in her way doth take ;
As fruitful every way, as those by nature, which
The Husbandman by art, with comfort doth enrich,
This boasting of herself ; that walke her verge about,
And view her well within, her breadth and length throughout :
The worst foot of her earth is equal with their best,
With most abundant store, the mightiest think them blest."

DA
670
N 69588

P R E F A C E .

THE following sketches were originally written, for the most part while the Author was resident in Northamptonshire, with a view merely to filling an occasional column of a newspaper. Many of them subsequently appeared in the *Northampton Mercury*, and it was only in consequence of the interest they then excited that the Author was induced to issue them in book form.

This brief statement is necessary to explain some faults of style and construction arising out of the form in which the various Legends were originally cast, and in great measure published. In other respects they have been carefully revised and corrected.

The collection would have been much larger but for an accident to which the best regulated Author's copy is liable, especially when at the mercy of occasional Arctic frosts and—still worse—sublunary plumbers. However, the disaster is not irremediable, and if this small budget receive favourable attention, the rest may follow in time.

LONDON,

February, 1883.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PETERBOROUGH I. - - - - - -	1
PETERBOROUGH II. - - - - - -	9
WEEDON - - - - - -	19
CAISTOR - - - - - -	27
PEAKIRK - - - - - -	41
STOWE - - - - - -	48
BRACKLEY - - - - - -	55
WHITTLEBURY - - - - - -	60
GRAFTON I. - - - - - -	68
GRAFTON II. - - - - - -	76
BURGHLEY - - - - - -	80
FOTHERINGAY I. - - - - - -	87
FOTHERINGAY II. - - - - - -	96
GREEN'S NORTON - - - - - -	103
HOLDENBY - - - - - -	109
CASTLE ASHBY - - - - - -	116
ASHBY ST. LEGER'S - - - - - -	124
TITCHMARSH - - - - - -	130
DAVENTRY - - - - - -	135
NASEBY - - - - - -	143
KIRBY - - - - - -	150
RUSHTON - - - - - -	158



LEGENDS OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Peterborough.

I.

“A spotless child sleeps on the flowing moss :
’Tis well for him ; but when a sinful man,
Envyng such slumber, may desire to put
His guilt away, shall he return at once
To rest by lying there ? Our sires knew well,
Spite of the grave discoveries of their sons,
The fitting course for such—dark cells, dim lamps,
A stone floor one may writhe on like a worm—
No mossy pillow blue with violets.”



THE history of Peterborough goes back to a time when dim lamps and stone floors formed a large item in the world's idea of a religious life—though not the whole ; for the very origin and growth of Peterborough, not as we see it to-day, but when it was, ecclesiastically speaking, larger and grander, attest a depth and fervour of faith in those who were the means of its rise and development, that contrasts very favourably with the religious life of our time ; as we may see from the story of those whose names are so intimately associated with the foundation and earlier annals of the place as a religious centre. If, looking back to that early period,

there is much that strikes us as barbarous and incongruous, it may enable us, perhaps, to appreciate in some small degree the advancement which a thousand years will probably score on our notions and our actions.

The original name of Peterborough was Medeshamstead. It is not exactly known how it came by the designation. Some derive it from the "medes," or meadows, formerly lying on both sides of the river Nene in this part, the surrounding country being mostly wooded. Gunton, however, in his "History of the Church of Peterborough," says the place derived its name from a deep pit in the Nene, called Medeswell, which, he goes on to say, "ancient writers of that place say was of wonderful depth, and cold in the heat of summer, that no swimmer was able to abide the cold of it, and yet in the winter was never known to be frozen." He adds that these properties are now lost with the well itself; only tradition says it was beneath the bridge.

It was a place of no note until Medeshamstead was chosen as the site of a religious house. This event occurred about the middle of the 7th century. Penda, king of the Mercians, of whom we read much in the old Anglo-Saxon chronicles, had just been slain in battle by Oswy, king of the Northumbrians. He left three sons, Peada, Wulfhere, and Ethelred, and two daughters, Kyneburga and Kynewitha, all of whom became Christians, and each in his or her way did much to advance the cause of religion. Peada appears to have spent considerable time at the court of Oswy (brother to the great king and martyr Oswald), between whose son Ælfrid and him there existed, says Swafham, great friendship. This bond was the cause of the two families being brought into more intimate relationship by a double marriage; Ælfrid (or Ælfrith) taking Peada's sister Kyneburga to wife, and Peada espousing Alfeda,

sister of Ælfrid. Whereupon, we are told, Peada, by persuasion of his faithful brother-in-law and of his pious sister, was made a Christian, and baptized in Northumberland by the famous bishop, Finan; from whom also he received four religious preachers of the Gospel to carry with him to his own country; whither he returned, says Swafham, "*plus jam gaudeus de æterna salute quam de petita Vergine.*" The names of the four presbyters were: Abde, Belta, Ceadda, and Diuma, and they are said in two years' time to have converted a great number to the Christian faith in Peada's country.

Bede says that not only Peada, but all his nobles and knights, and every one of his servants, were baptized, and that the heathen Penda, "the last hope of the old gods," was, when his son returned, so far from prohibiting the spread of the Christian religion in his kingdom, that he hated and despised those who, having received the Christian faith, did not live accordingly, saying they were wretched creatures who did not take care to obey the God in whom they believed.

These things took place two years before Penda's death, which occurred in battle against Oswy, king of Northumbria, in the year 655. Peada, being the oldest son, was made by Oswy under-king of the South Mercians. No sooner had he ascended the throne than he set about building a monastery at Medeshamstead, "in the foundations whereof," we are told, "he laid such stones* as that eight yoke of oxen could scarce draw one of them." The noble work was begun in the year 656, or as some say 655. Hedda says the monastery was commenced "fifty and five years after the coming of Austin, the monk, into England."

King Peada did not live to see the finish of his work, for his wife, Alfeda, forgetting the glorious memory of her

* Obtained from Barnack.

ancestors—Oswald, the martyred King of Northumberland, her uncle; King Oswy, her father; and King Ælfrid, her brother—betrayed him to death at the Paschal Feast, after he had reigned but four years. Some, however, say it was not his wife, but his step-mother, who was the cause of his death. Then the crown passed to his brother Wulfhere, who headed a revolt against the dominion of Northumbria, and for a time won a power even greater than that of his father. Like his elder brother, Wulfhere was received into the Christian church by a Northumbrian bishop.

On being baptized, Wulfhere took a vow that he would purge his kingdom of idolatry, demolish all idolatrous places, and to the utmost of his power promote the Christian religion. This vow he renewed when he was married to Ermenilda, daughter of Egbert, King of Kent, who was a most pious and exemplary woman. Wulfhere, however, followed the evil counsels of Werbode, his steward or councillor. Some chroniclers affirm that this Werbode had been privy councillor to King Penda, who esteemed him much as David did Achitophel, and allowed him to govern the whole kingdom under him. Wulfhere seems to have entertained the same esteem for him, and within a short while, giving too much ear and heed to his suggestions, the king forgot his vow. He took no care to promote the Christian religion, nor to erect temples, but committed many impieties, so that the darkness of heathenism began again to overspread the land.

The story of how Wulfhere was won back to the Christian faith is told elsewhere; but there are one or two incidents connected with the legend which may be given here. His son Wulfade pursued a hart until it took soil in a fountain near to the cell of St. Chad, and the latter, seeing the poor beast weary and almost spent, was so compassionate towards him that he covered him with

boughs and leaves, conjecturing that Heaven had some design in thus bringing the beast to his very door. Presently Wulfade came and inquired of St. Chad if he had seen the hart. The holy man answered that he was not a keeper of beasts, but of the souls of men, and that he, Wulfade, had been sent thither by God, as a hart to the water-brooks, to the fountain of living waters. Wulfade hearing all this with astonishment, entered into further conference with St. Chad in his cell, and presently consented to be baptized by him. Then, returning joyfully to his father's court, he secretly told his brother Rufine of all that had passed, and persuaded him to be baptized also. Then—

“ Wulfade Rufine to Seynt Chad leedeth,
And Chad with love of faith him feedeth.
Rufine is christened of St. Chaddys
And Wulfade his brother his Godfather is.”

After this the brothers often resorted to a private oratory, where they performed their devotions; and when they were slain by their royal father,—whose insane rage was not satisfied until, aided by Werbode, he had demolished the little chapel, which was probably made of “wreathen boughs,” as were most of the Saxon shrines in those days,—the bodies of the princes were buried beneath the ruins.

Werbode's retribution did not wait long. Shortly after this unnatural and bloody act, we are told, the wicked steward was strangled by the devil in front of the king's house—a fitting, but somewhat doubtful climax to his villainy. Another, and more likely account, says he “was made as one possessed of a devil,” and that he tore the flesh from his arms with his own teeth, and so died distracted. The metrical account above quoted from says—

“ Werbode for vengeance his own flesh tare,
The Devil him strangled and to hell bare.”

Whereupon King Wulfhere, stricken with remorse, went

to St. Chad to "shrive him clean," promising to expiate his great crimes with whatever penance the holy man should see fit to impose upon him, and he was commanded "to restore the Christian religion and the ruined temples thereof, and likewise to found new ones."

I follow chiefly the narrative of Walter of Whittlesea, an ancient monk of Peterborough, who further adds that Chad, "having prayed with King Wulfhere in his oratory, put off his vestment and hanged it on a sunbeam, which supported it, that it fell not to the ground; which Wulfhere seeing, put off his gloves and belt, and essayed to hang them there also; but they fell to the ground; whereat the king was more confirmed in his Christian faith."

Other chroniclers (Hugo and Hedda among the number) say not a word about Wulfhere's relapse from the faith, but, on the contrary, aver that he was so earnest that "he made it his business not only to kindle a like conviction in his own people, but to bring the southern kings and people that were subject to him *ad veram Dei sectam*."

Anyway, the building of the monastery of Medeshamstead, begun by Peada, now went on amain through the zealous endeavours of King Wulfhere, who was assisted therein by his brother Ethelred, and his sisters Kyneburga and Kyneswitha, until the work was completed, when it was dedicated to St. Peter. Then the king and his brother and sisters bestowed many large privileges and immunities upon it, gave many fair possessions to it, and established the bounds of its jurisdiction "from Crowland on the east to Walmisford Bridge on the West, and so northward to Eston and Stamford, and so along by the river of Welland to Crowland again, as is more at large set down in the charter which he sealed and confirmed in the presence of kings, nobles, and bishops, in the year of our Lord 664, and the 7th of his reign."

The story of Wulfhere and his doings—legendary or other—was afterwards painted on the windows in the western cloister of the abbey, with accompanying descriptive rhymes (some of which are given above); “and,” says Gunton in his History, “in the quadrangle of the whole cloyster, commonly called ‘the Laurel Yard,’ was there a well, which common tradition would have to be that wherein St. Chad concealed Prince Wulfade’s hart.” He adds, that inasmuch as King Wulfhere sometimes kept his court at Weedon-in-the-Street, it might be conjectured that these things happened at Peterborough, but goes on to give his reason for believing that such could not have been the case. St. Chad had his cell where the cathedral of Lichfield now stands, and tradition says that the murdered youths, Wulfade and Rufine, were buried by their mother, who built a church of stone on the spot where they were slain, whence the place is called Stone to this day.

In due course, Wulfhere was gathered to his fathers, and according to Speed, was buried at Peterborough. He was succeeded by his brother Ethelred, since he left no issue. According to another account, however, Wulfhere had a younger son than the two who were murdered, but he was too young to reign when his royal father died. This son was named Kenred, and there is a tradition that he succeeded his uncle, and reigned over Mercia for four years; then resigning the crown, he went to Rome and became a monk. The uncle, too, whom he succeeded, after reigning thirty years, became weary of pomp and power, and exchanging the kingly crown for a monk’s cowl, ended his days in a monastery at Bardney in Lincolnshire. Thus it was that the Christian ideal dealt with great ones in those days, who,

“Leaving human wrongs to right themselves,
Cared but to pass into the silent life.”

Sexulph was the first abbot of Medeshamstead. By several writers is styled the builder of the monastery, having contributed much towards it with King Wulfhere, who, in his charter to the place, says it was "gloriously built by the industry of the Venerable Sexulphus." He was an earl, and possessed great power under Penda; but embracing Christianity, and taking to the monkish life, he forwarded the building of Medeshamstead, and became, as we have seen, the first abbot. He arrived at a great height of fame and reputation by his piety and holy life, and quickly gathered together a convent of monks, who flocked to him from several places, "so that in a short time this nest produced many birds by whom many other monasteries were also founded, especially that of Thorney, founded by Abbot Sexulph. . . . There did Sexulph build a place for anchorites; and having been Abbot of Medeshampstead the space of thirteen years, he was translated to the bishopric of the Middle English or Mercians."

Sexulphus was succeeded in the abbacy of Medeshamstead by Cuthbald (673), under whom the monastery rose to great repute for learning and piety. It also increased greatly in wealth and power, for King Ethelred, says the record, "continued his good affection to the monastery." He was a great benefactor to the establishment. Among other things, he granted that the Abbot of Medeshamstead should be chief of all the abbots on this side of the river Thames, and accordingly to have the first place in all ecclesiastical assemblies. In Cuthbald's time also, Pope Agatho granted that whosoever should visit religiously the church of St. Peter in this monastery, should enjoy the same benefits and indulgences as those who travelled to visit the church of St. Peter at Rome; which privileges were likewise confirmed by the same pope in a council of 125 bishops then assembled at Rome (Anno 680).



Peterborough.

II.

“Seynt Athelwold was bidden by God’s lore
The Abbey of Brough again to restore.
Seynt Athelwold to King Edgar went
And prayed him to help him in his intent.
Edgar bade Athelwold the work begin
And him to help he would not lyn.”



AFTER the monastery of Medeshamstead had been in existence some two hundred and fourteen years it fell a prey to the ferocity of the Danes under Hinguar and Hulba. They landed on the coast of Northumbria in the year 870, and gradually made their way south, slaying and spreading destruction wherever they went. After sacking and burning Crowland they came “with great booty of goods and cattle” to Medeshamstead. They found the monastery crowded with country people, and the monks ready for a stout defence. The abbey was assaulted several times in vain; but at length Tulba, brother of Earl Hulba, being struck on the head by a stone, cast from one of the towers, and killed, Hulba ordered a final assault, and this time succeeded in effecting an entrance into the monastery, whereupon, we are told, “he slew all the monks with his own hand, and the rest of the people were slaughtered by the soldiers.” None escaped; even the aged Abbot Hedda “escaped not the hands of Hulba,” but was “slain with the monks.” Then the altars were broken down, the monuments de-

molished, the "goodly library" set on fire, and the charters and other writings destroyed.

Among the Danes were two earls named Sidroc, "the one older and the other younger." When the attack was made on Crowland, the younger Sidroc, seeing a handsome boy about twelve years of age among the hapless refugees in the monastery, took pity on him, threw a Danish habit over him and bade him follow him closely. The youth did so, and was spared in the dreadful carnage. Sidroc then took the boy with him, and he was present at the destruction of Medeshamstead.

The Danes sacked the place for four days, and then went away; first, however, giving the church, together with the conventual and other buildings, to the flames. The conflagration, we are told, lasted fifteen days. As the marauding host were crossing the river Nen on their departure a mishap occurred. The two Sidrocs guarded the rear from attack, and when the multitude had passed over the river, and the rear-guard was in the act of doing so with their booty, "two waines, laden with their riches, were overthrown, and, together with their horses, sunk into the deep bed, a little beneath the bridge," haply, thinks Gunton, in the Medeswell before mentioned. In the confusion which ensued the lad of Crowland, whose name was Thurgar, made his escape and found his way back to Crowland.

Meanwhile, at the latter place, a number of monks, who had saved themselves by flight into the fens, had set to work, seeing the coast was clear of Danes, and cleansed the place of ashes and other rubbish. Then they chose for abbot one of their own number named Godricus, "a reverend and religious man;" "to whom," says Ingulphus, "there came Toretus, prior of Ancarig (Thorney), with his sub-prior Tisa, desiring Godricus that he would take some

brethren with him and go over to Medeshamstead, to give Christian burial to the bodies of those monks who were exposed to beasts and birds." Godricus embraced the notion gladly, took the youth Thurgar and some of the monks with him, and came to Medeshamstead. They found the bodies of eighty-four monks, and piously laid them all in one large grave in the middle of the churchyard, by the east front of the monastery. This was upon the feast of St. Cecilia. Over the grave Godricus put up a "pyramidal stone," and every year so long as he lived he visited the place, pitched his tent over the said stone, and prayed for two days for the souls of Abbot Hedda and the monks. The highway into Holland, we are told, was through the same churchyard, having that monumental stone on the right hand, and over against it a cross of stone erected by the same abbot. The cross had been long since demolished in Gunton's time, but the monumental stone still existed.

The monastery of Medeshamstead thus destroyed lay buried in its own ruins for the space of ninety-six years. King Beorredus, it is said, seized the lands of the monastery and gave them to his soldiers, until Adelwold (or Athelwold), Bishop of Winchester (a man very zealous in building and restoring churches) laid his hand to restoring it. Legend says that he was "warned of God in the night that he should go to the middle English and repair the monastery of St. Peter." He accordingly bent his steps into those parts, and came to Oundle, supposing that to be the place; but he was warned a second time and directed that he should follow the course of the river. This he did, and so came to Medeshamstead, which "he found desolate and forsaken." "Presently," we are told, "with such help as he could get, he fell to the cleansing of it." But seeing what a great business this restoration was like to prove, he returned to Winchester to make preparations for so

great a design. "And first," it is related, "he made his address to God by fervent prayers to incline the hearts of King Edgar and his queen and nobles that he might have them so propitious as to contribute their assistance to this work. And being one time at his prayers, the queen had secretly gotten behind the door to listen what it was that Adelwold prayed, and suddenly she came forth upon him, telling him that God and herself had heard his prayers; and from thenceforth," the narrative continues, "she began to solicit the king for the reparation of the monastery." Edgar at length gave his consent, and diligently applied himself to the work until it was finished, which was in the year 970.

When thus completed King Edgar desired to see it, and accordingly went thither, with Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, Oswald, Archbishop of York, and a large company of nobility and clergy, all of whom were much pleased with the place. But, says the chronicler (Ingulphus), when King Edgar heard that some charters and writings which some monks had secured from the fury of the Danes were found, he desired to see them, and having read the privileges of this place, that he had a second Rome within his own kingdom, he wept for joy, and in the presence of the assembly confirmed their former privileges and possessions.* At this great assembly, we are told, the name of the place was changed from Medeshamstead to Burgh, or Gildenburgh, because of its privileges and wealth; though in later times it came to be known as Peterborough in consequence of its dedication. Peterborough now enjoyed tolerable quiet until the invasion of England by William of Normandy; when it again fell upon troublous times. Brando was then abbot, or, to be strictly accurate, he was elected abbot just after the coming of William; when

* These preserved charters, it should be said, are reputed to have been forged.

there was enough doubt about his hold on the country to cause Brando to address himself to Edgar Ætheling, for his confirmation, supposing him, we are told, "to be the lawful heir to the crown of England, notwithstanding the late conquest by William of Normandy." Brando's innocence, however, cost him much, and might have had more serious consequences. William hearing of his appeal to Edgar was much incensed against him, and was only mollified by a present of forty marks from the abbot. This solatium and a promise not to offend again obtained for him William's confirmation of his title and possessions.

This Brando, or Brand, was the uncle of the famous Hereward the Wake, the man of all others who gave the Norman conquerors the most trouble. Hereward was lord of Brunne (now Bourne), in Lincolnshire, and was created a knight by Brando. Sir Henry Ellis (in his *Introduction to Domesday*), Mr. Thomas Wright, and (following them) the Rev. Charles Kingsley,* believed Hereward to have been the son of Earl Leofric and the Lady Godiva; but the evidence on the point is open to doubt; much more so than his supposed ancestorship of the ancient and honourable Northamptonshire family of Wake. The "Wake knot," says Kingsley, in which (according to tradition) two monk's girdles are worked into the form of the letter W, and the motto "*Virgila et ora*," may well have been used by Hereward himself.

For long years Hereward tried to rouse the broken spirit of the English, by open defiance of the Norman conqueror, and by keeping up the war of resistance after it had died out, or had been utterly crushed, everywhere else. The field of his activity and warfare extended throughout the fenlands of the eastern counties, including Cambridge, Huntingdon, Northampton, Lincoln, etc. But what more

* See his "*Hereward the Wake*."

particularly concerns us here are Hereward's doings at Peterborough. So long as his uncle the abbot lived, Hereward molested not the monastery under his charge ; but no sooner was his Norman successor, Thorold, or Toroldus, appointed than he fell upon it like a swift bird of prey. "He was no sooner settled in the monastery," says Hugo, "but all manner of evils came to it. For that very year (1069) the Danes returned to infest England, under the conduct of Suenus (Abbot John says, the sons of Sweyne), then king, with a very great army." A part of this army under Osbeorn, the same chronicler goes on to say, went to Ely, and was there reinforced by a large number of English under Hereward the Wake, who had just returned from Flanders (where he had been for awhile), and who, hearing how much his family and kindred had suffered by the Normans, and finding Ivo Tailbois, the Conqueror's nephew, in possession of his estate, was extremely enraged, and resolved by force of arms to recover his own, "though with the havoc and spoil of other people." He it was, says Ingulphus, following Hugo, that invited and incited also Osbeorn and his Danes to go and plunder this abbey, when he knew the abbot his uncle was dead, and his place filled by a Norman (whom he accounted an intruder), and he a very severe man ; who lay then with some soldiers at Stamford.

The monks, however, had timely notice of the coming of the enemy, and were able to pack off the sacristan with all the valuables he could ; namely, the Texts of the Gospels, with the chasubles, copes, albes, etc., with which he went to Abbot Thorold at Stamford. Hereward and his company arrived the same morning in boats, and straightway attacked the monastery ; the monks, however, held the Close stoutly, and Hereward was obliged to set fire to the houses near the gate, in order to effect an entrance ; whereupon he

burnt the whole town, sparing only the church and one house.

Then, in spite of the prayers of the monks, they entered the holy edifice, and endeavoured to carry away its great cross, but could not. "Yet they took the golden crown from the head of the crucifix, with the precious stones, and the footstool under its feet, made of pure gold and gems, together with *duo aurea feretra* (two golden or gilded bears, whereon were carried the saints' reliques and other such like things in procession) and nine silver ones, and twelve crosses, some of gold, some of silver. Besides these, they took other valuables, including abundance of books and other precious things," the like of which was not in all England, says the chronicler. But what seemed most to enrage the monks was that the freebooters pretended to do all this out of pure faithfulness to the Church, saying that the Danes would preserve their booty for the use of the Church better than the Franks would do. Hereward himself afterwards swore that he acted with good intention, because he thought everything would have fallen into the hands of William of Normandy if he had not taken it.

After having sacked the place, they went away to Ely, taking with them Adelwoldus the prior, and a number of the monks. Adelwoldus watched his opportunity, and when once the Danes were drinking and making merry over their success, he secured some of the stolen treasures and relics, among them the arm of Saint Oswald, famous for its miraculous powers, and hid them in the straw of his bed until he could get away. On their way back to Peterborough they stayed at Ramsey, where the monks took their relics, and would not restore them until threatened by Thorold.

When Hereward and the Danes had got fairly off with their loot, Abbot Thorold arrived on the scene with a

hundred and fifty Normans well armed, but to find nobody there, and the place laid desolate, all being burnt, within and without, except the church; "insomuch," says the chronicler, "that the city not long ago called *Aurea* was now made *pauperrima*."

When the abbot returned, the monks, who had been scattered, returned and performed the offices of the church, which had been discontinued seven days. Abbot Thorold hired a number of mercenaries, upon whom he settled sixty hides of land, as a protection against Hereward; and as an additional safeguard, he built within the monastery a fort or castle, which was called Mount Thorold, so that it "seemed rather a warlike than a religious place."

Next year (1071), says the chronicle, Thorold had the pleasure to see Hereward hardly escaping out of the Isle of Ely, where most of his followers were taken; nevertheless, "the Wake" presently rallied again, and was soon once more in force in the neighbourhood of Peterborough. A great army was raised out of the counties of Northampton, Cambridge, Lincoln, Huntingdon, etc., "while Hereward lay with a few followers, in comparison, skulking in the woods nigh unto Burch." So says Hugo, who pretends to have gathered his facts "out of such fragments as could be found of a book written in the English tongue by Alefricus Diaconus, who was Hereward's priest." The "great army" was led by Thorold and Ivo Tailbois, who encompassed Hereward and his men so closely as to greatly distress them. Hereward, however, nothing daunted, placed his archers and slingers (*sagitarii et balistarii*) under cover of a great mass of trees which he had had cut down to protect them; and every now and again, as opportunity offered, he made a sally, made great slaughter, and then retired under shelter again. This he continued to do all day long, till he had so tired out the enemy, that they were

glad to raise the siege. Then Hereward attacked them in the rear with all his force, and beat them up so sharply that they were thrown into great confusion, so that many prisoners were taken, and among them Abbot Thorold himself, whom he kept in custody till he redeemed himself and other "considerable persons" with the sum of three thousand marks of silver.

Notwithstanding some marks of kindness he had received at the hands of Hereward or of his relatives, his nephew, for one thing, having been honourably entertained by a cousin of Hereward "out of reverence to the abbot," Thorold immediately prepared to renew the war against him, using the wealth of the Church and its possessions in land to pay his soldiery. This coming to the ears of Hereward, he, seeing "he was likely to suffer for his kindness," made no delay, but the same night marched with all his force to Peterborough, and burning the whole town (which it seems by this story began to be built again), carried away all the treasure of the church, and pursued the abbot himself, who, however, managed to escape.

But the next night (continues the chronicler) Hereward thought he saw in his dreams an old man of inestimable beauty, and in brighter apparel than any he had ever beheld or imagined, but with terrible countenance, who bade him (threatening him with a great key he held in his hand, and with a dreadful voice), if he loved his life, immediately to restore all he had taken out of the church; whereupon he rose up the very same hour, and carrying back all that he had pillaged, straightway departed from Burgh, but lost his way in the darkness, so that he and his men wandered up and down in the woods, not knowing whither they went, till a great wolf appeared and marched in front of them like a household dog, and led them the right way, as they saw by lighted candles which appeared upon every

man's shield, and that none of them could pull off or blow out. But when morning appeared both wolf and candles vanished, and they came whither they designed beyond Stamford.

The same writer narrates many other wonderful achievements of this famous warrior, and at last shows how he was reconciled to the king, having all his father's lands and possessions restored to him, and living peaceably and happily, and finally dying in peace. Others say that, having taken Ivo Tailbois in battle, he would not deliver him until the king, to save his nephew, promised on oath to Hereward, not only reconciliation and pardon, but the full restitution of all that had been his: which, says Abbot John, was done in the year 1076, until which time from the death of Brando, not only Peterborough, but many other monasteries suffered greatly.





Weedon.

“The potent call,
Doubtless shall cheat full oft the heart’s desires,
Yet, while the rugged age on pliant knee,
Vows to rapt Fancy humble fealty,
A gentler life spreads round the holy spires :
Where’er they rise, the sylvan waste retires,
And æry harvests crown the fertile lea.”



HERE are several interesting legends connected with Weedon. It used formerly to be believed that it was once an important Roman station. Camden, Norton, and others place Bennavenna or Isanavatia there ; but subsequent writers agree with Baker, in regarding Borough Hill, near Daventry, as the true site of the ancient Bennavenna. Though shorn of this honour, Weedon is not left without special claims for distinction. Its position on the Watling Street way early gave it an importance which places somewhat removed from that great thoroughfare did not possess. Even in Leland’s time it was still a noted place on this account. He says of it : “Wedon is a praty thorough fare, sette on a playne ground, and much celebrated by carians, because it stondeh hard by the famouse Way there commounely caullid of the People Watheling Strete. And upon this the tounet is caullid Weedon-on-the-Streate.”

But when war was almost the everyday thought or occupation of kings, princes, and people, proximity to such

a highway was of even greater moment than during the "piping times of peace," when trade and commerce only engaged men's minds. Hence, during the early days of Saxon domination, we find Weedon the seat of Mercian kings. One of the most prominent rulers of Middle England, both in history and legend, is Wulfhere. Wulfhere, or Wulfere, as the name is sometimes spelt, was the son of Penda, and was elevated to the throne of Mercia in 658, by the leaders of a revolt against Oswy, of Northumbria, who had given Mercia to Peada, Wulfhere's brother, and on his assassination resumed it again. Wulfhere, by his warlike spirit, rendered himself independent of Northumbria. He waged war with Kenwalch of Wessex, and though not at first successful, he finally obtained the mastery, and added to his dominions a considerable portion of Sussex and Essex. He died in 675, and is said by some to have been buried at Peterborough ; in connection with the abbey of which, he, as well as his predecessor, Peada, has already been referred to. Others, however, say that he was buried at Lichfield.

Moreton has a very good guess as to the derivation of the name of Weedon. "This," he says, "perhaps might be owing to Peada, the eldest son of Penda, King of Mercia, and his immediate successor in the kingdom, who, in old writers, is frequently called Weda, and particularly in Higden. . . . The shape of the Saxon W, which very much resembles a P, might easily occasion this mistake of the transcribers in after ages, when the Saxon character was disused and unknown. . . . So that probably Wedon is a contraction of Weadaton, or Weada's town."

Legend says that King Wulfhere, when he ascended the throne, promised to abolish the idolatry which existed in this realm ; but he afterwards forgot his vow, and not only

he, but all his people, lapsed into rank heathenism. His subsequent conversion was due to a miracle and a crime. The story goes that Wulfhere had two sons, Wulfade and Rufine, and that one day they were out hunting, when they were led by a hart to St. Chad's cell, and by him converted. The beautiful legend was formerly inscribed beneath the cloister windows of Peterborough, and I cannot do better than transcribe it.

“ By Queen Ermenild had King Wulfere
These twey sons that ye see here.
Wulfade rideth as he was wont,
Into the forest the hart to hunt ;
Fro all his men Wulfade is gone,
And suyeth himself the hart alone.
The hart brought Wulfade to a well,
That was beside Seynt Chaddy's cell.
Wulfade askyd of Seynt Chad,
Where is the hart that me hath lad ?
The hart that hither thee hath brought,
Is sent by Christ, that thee hath bought.
Wulfade preyd Chad, that ghostly leech,
The faith of Christ him for to teach.
Seynt Chad teacheth Wulfade the feyth,
And words of baptism over him seyth.
Seynt Chad devoutly to mass him dight,
And hoseled Wulfade Christy's knight.
Wulfade wished Seynt Chad that day,
For his brother Rufine to pray.”

The legend goes on to say that Rufine also was baptized by the saint. The steward of Wulfhere, a man of low origin, named Werbode (who had been rebuked by the princes for seeking the hand of their sister, Werburga, in marriage), informed the king of their having become Christians, and that they were then praying in St. Chad's oratory. The king rode thither at once, and finding them as was said, slew them both with his own hand. Stung with remorse,

he fell ill, and was counselled by Ermenilda, his queen, to ask St. Chad to shrive him. This he did, and, as an act of penance, he was required to build seven abbeys, and among the number he completed that of Peterborough, which his father had begun.

Ethelred, the brother and successor of Wulfhere to the throne of Mercia, converted the royal palace at Weedon into a monastery, and set over it his niece, Werburga. Saint Werburga was one of four children, which Ermenilda bore King Wulfhere. She is supposed to have been born at Stone, in Staffordshire. From her earliest infancy she took a vow to devote her life to religion, and that determination was daily strengthened by the lessons of Christian truth she received from the lips of her sainted mother. She exceeded the other children of the family in virtue and discretion. Her mind was ever open to receive good impressions, and so she daily grew in grace and in the knowledge of Christian truth. At an age when most young people of her exalted station would have been found devoting themselves to pleasure, and merely worldly pursuits, she sought that truest joy which can come alone from the contemplation of heavenly things. Her thoughts, therefore, were continually expanding under the influence of holy thoughts and pure desires. She is said to have daily assisted her mother in the performance of the whole Church offices, and to have spent much time besides in private devotions. She ever had in her mind the vow she had taken to devote her life to religion—that is, to become a nun—but she was prevented from so doing by her father, who was still a heathen.

She was not, however, destined to overcome the world without a struggle. Temptations began to gather around her. The beauty of her person and the graces of her mind attracted crowds of admirers, and she was eagerly sought

in marriage by many. Foremost among her suitors was a prince of the West Saxons. But she turned a deaf ear to his flattering proposals, telling him she had resolved to become the bride of Christ, and wished no earthly spouse.

Anon, another, and more violent suitor, presented himself. Werbode, a powerful noble of her father's court, backed by the king's influence, entreated Werburga to become his wife; but to his solicitations also she turned a deaf ear. Nothing daunted by this refusal, the incensed courtier resolved to compass his ends by foul means, if he could not gain them by fair ones. Imagining that the princess was incited to reject his suit by her brothers Wulfade and Rufine, who, he knew were under the instruction of St. Chad, Werbode sought an opportunity to murder the two youths, and thus put them out of his way. So successful was he in his diabolical design, that he actually incensed the king against his sons to such an extent that he slew them, as related above. Werbode soon after died a miserable death; while the king, conscience smitten, remorsefully reviewed his past life, and saw how shamefully he had broken the vow he had taken to extirpate idolatry from his realm. He began earnestly and sorrowfully to atone for his faults. His first step was to destroy the idols, and to convert their temples into churches. He then set about completing the great abbey of Medeshamstead, or Peterborough, and in every way endeavoured to propagate the true faith among his people.

Encouraged by the happy change in his disposition, Werburga again opened to her father the earnest desire of her heart, and entreated his permission to consecrate herself wholly to God. Though at first grieved at the request, Wulfhere at length yielded to her entreaties, and, attended by his whole court, conducted her with great state to the Convent of Ely, then under the superintendence of St.

Etheldreda. They were met at the gates by a long procession of nuns, singing hymns of thanksgiving. Werburga, throwing herself upon her knees, begged of the abbess that she might be received as a postulant. Her request having been granted, the voice of praise was again raised, the nuns chanting the *Te Deum* as they returned to the convent. The usual trials now ensued : the royal noviciate was first divested of her costly apparel ; her rich coronet was replaced by a poor veil ; purple and silk and gold gave way to a coarse lowly garb, and the one who had been used to the command of servants and followers was obliged to submit herself to the direction of her superior.

Werburga now, with great fervour, gave herself entirely to religion, and sought, by all the means provided by the Church, to wean her affections from earthly things, and fix them more firmly upon those which are of heaven.

This life lasted for many years ; but upon her father's death she was placed by her uncle Ethelred, who succeeded him, over the monastery he had established at Weedon. The fame of her piety, indeed, was so great that she was selected to preside over all the religious houses for women in the kingdom of Mercia. By some authorities it is stated that she prevailed upon her uncle to give her the means to found the convents of Trentham, Hanbury, and Repton, over which she presided. When she entered upon this larger sphere of duty, she laboured with the most earnest diligence to make all the houses under her care models of strict monastic discipline.

Werburga spent much of her time at Weedon, and it was there that the miracle, recorded of her in Cresy's Church History, was performed. The corn-fields in the neighbourhood having suffered greatly from the depredations of wild geese, St. Werburga remonstrated with them, and forbade them ever to re-visit her demesnes. They paid, says the

legend, implicit obedience to this behest; and Bridges records the fact that in his time there was a vulgar superstition that no wild geese were ever seen to settle and graze in "Weedon field." Drayton, in his *Poly-Olbion*, has the following reference to this myth:—

"She (the Nen) falleth in her way with Weedon, where 'tis said
Saint Werburge, princely borne, a most religious mayd,
From those peculiar fields by prayer the wild geese drove."

King Ethelred, also at Werburga's request, founded the collegiate church of St. John the Baptist, in the suburbs of West Chester, and gave to St. Egwen the ground for the great abbey of Evesham.

St. Werburga, both by precept and example, sought to stimulate the religious life in those placed under her charge, and many, through her influence, were turned from a life of dissipation and vice to one of usefulness and holiness. The old chronicles say that she became the most perfect pattern of meekness, humility, patience, and purity. Her prayers, fastings, and mortifications were almost incredible. She seldom took more than one meal a-day, and that was of the coarsest kind of food. In the exercise of these devotions she lived to a ripe old age. Receiving at last some premonitions of her approaching end, she made a farewell visit to all the houses under her care, and exhorted the inmates to increased fervour. Returning, then, to the convent at Trentham, in Staffordshire, she there awaited her end, which took place on the 3rd of February, 699.

In accordance with an expressed wish, her corpse was buried at Hanbury, and remained there until 708, when it was disinterred, in the presence of King Coelred and many bishops, and transferred to a costly shrine. The old chronicles say that the body was found incorrupt, and remained so until 878, when, for fear of the Danes, who were

ravaging the country, the shrine was removed to Chester. The body, however, fell to dust soon after its translation. In course of time a stately church was erected over the relics; this became the cathedral of Chester, and as such exists to this day. During the reign of Henry VIII. the shrine was broken open and the relics of the saint scattered to the four winds. What remained of the costly shrine was afterwards converted into an episcopal throne, and may still be seen, bearing curiously carved images of the kings of Mercia, ancestors of St. Werburga, who flourished eleven centuries ago.

No trace now remains of the Palace of Wulfhere, or of the Monastery of St. Werburga; though, in Leland's time, "there stood a fair chapel dedicated to St. Wereburge, a little from the south side of the church-yard at Weedon." Bridges states that, by digging in the upper part of the ground called the Ashyards, to the south of the church, the foundation of old buildings have been discovered, and large stone walls taken up. These, he concluded, were probably the ruins of St. Werburga's Monastery, or, it may be, of King Wulfhere's Palace.





Caistor.

“The Abbess was of noble blood,
But early took the veil and hood.

* * * * *

Black was her garb, her rigid rule
Reform'd on Benedictine school ;
Her cheek was pale, her form was spare ;
Vigils and penitence severe
Had early quench'd the light of youth,
But gentle was the dame in sooth.”



NE of the most interesting places in the county, alike for its antiquities and its legends, is Caistor. Antiquaries identify it with the ancient city of Durobrivæ, which stood on both sides of the Nene, which here divides the county from Huntingdonshire. Camden gives the river the general appellation of Avon or Avona, and Leland, who supports him, from Avona, or Avene, as he writes it, derives the name Nene. The name of Caistor, like that of the neighbouring village of Chesterton, denotes its Roman origin. From the number of remains here about, it is evident that it was a Roman settlement or *castra* (camp). Its importance as a military station may be inferred from its position on the Evrmen-stræt, the street of Evrmen, who was one of the chief Anglo-Saxon divinities, and whose name was often compounded in those of persons and things which were regarded as great or wonderful. The name at a later period became corrupted to Ermyrn Street, and designated a great Roman road which ran direct from Pevensey and

Regnum through London and by Caistor (*Durobrivæ*) to Lincoln, and so on through Yorkshire to the south of Scotland. In the neighbourhood of Caistor are still to be seen vestiges of two other ancient ways—the so-called Forty-foot way leading to Stamford, and the Long-ditch by Loham-bridges, through West Deeping in Lincolnshire. These are branches of the old Ermyrn Street, which is here, by the way, called Norman Gate.

When troubles at the heart of the empire caused the Romans to neglect or discard its outlying members, and Britain as one of such was relinquished to its aboriginal inhabitants, and those who came to divide or dispute its possession with them, *Durobrivæ*, like many another important Roman city or station, became, we may imagine, a ruin and desolation, unknown probably to living thing, save the rank vegetation which invaded its gardens and courts, and the wild creatures that made home of its solitudes, and maybe an occasional troop of armed men, for the Angles and Saxons, who eventually succeeded to the dominion given up by the Romans, not having the art of making roads themselves, made use of those left them by the conquerors of the world, and never felt so secure as when

“ Before them lay
For many a league the Roman way.”

It was, doubtless, owing to its being on the great Ermyrn Street way, and its position on the Nene, that caused the old military station to become again, in the course of time, an inhabited place; the new settlers finding it also convenient, in the construction of their abodes, to use up the material at hand in the half-obliterated ruins about them. The place was called *Dermundcester*, or *Dormancestre*, by the early English settlers, but afterwards it got the name of *Kyneburgcastre*, from the name of a noble lady who

spent the greater portion of her life there, doing good according to the light she had. That light led her to give up wealth and station, and lead a religious life. Kyneburga was the daughter of Penda, King of Mercia, and wife of Ælfrid, son of Oswy, King of Northumberland. Following the example of many a royal personage in those rude and even savage but terribly earnest times, Kyneburga, we are told, quitted the splendours and pleasures of the Court, to preside over the virgins of her own convent, a

“ Pensive nun, devout and poor,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train.”

That convent was erected at Caistor: hence the name Kyneburgcastre, and, by contraction, Castre, or Caistor, as at present written.

In the Golden Legend, the story of Saint Kyneburga is told in the following words:—“ Est autem in orientali regionis plaga, non procul ab amne Normine Ven, locus dictus Dermundecastre, ubi monastrio ædificato, Sancta Kyneburga, mundo contemplo, multio congregatis virginibus, Abbat issa effecta est, e quo locus ille nomen trahens Kyneburge cæstrum vocatur.” In the old English chronicles the tradition is recorded that two daughters of the savage old heathen, Penda, King of Mercia, Kyneburga and Kyneswitha, both gave up the thought of marriage in order to consecrate themselves to God. The eldest, who was nominally married to Ælfrid, the oldest son of King Oswy, of Northumberland, is said to have left him with his consent, after having lived with him some years in virginal continence, to end her life in the cloister. The other, Kyneswitha, sought in marriage by Offa, King of the East Saxons, used her connection with the young

prince only to persuade him to embrace the monastic life, as she herself desired to do.

It has, however, been proved that the two daughters of Penda contributed, with their brothers, Wulphere and Ethelred, to the establishment of the great Abbey of Medeshamstead, or Peterborough, and that their names appear in the list of the national assembly which sanctioned the foundation. It was, therefore, not until after this that they gave up the world, and devoted themselves to a religious life at Dermundcestre,

“The world forgetting, by the world forgot.”

An old chronicler of the lives of the saints says of these pious women: “S. Kyneburg and Kyneswide, daughters to wicked Penda, the heathen King of the Mercians, inherited so little of their father’s impiety, and were so far from following the blind ways of his Paganism, that, contrarywise, like two bright stars, they shined in the true profession of Christian religion and virtue: so that their father, though ever rebellious against Almighty God, yet in them he furnished his heavenly kingdom with two most sacred branches of sanctity.” Kyneburga, we are told, accepted the hand of Ælfrid, or Alkfryd, as the name is more frequently spelled, in order to get out of the reach of her father’s cruelty, “which was rather an advancement than a hinderance to her, in the continuell exercise of vertue and pietie.” During the reign of his half-brother, King Egfrid, Ælfrid lived like a banished man in Ireland, where, applying himself to study, he became, say the chronicles, an excellent philosopher, and very conversant and learned in the Holy Scriptures. Whether this banishment was a voluntary one, or constrained by violence, history saith not, but probably it was forced. Though an illegitimate son of Oswy, he was chosen to succeed Egfrid,

by reason of his excellent parts and great learning. The pious Kyneburga must have found much that was congenial to her disposition in that of her husband: but, nevertheless, the story continues, she never ceased with her pious persuasions to solicit the king until he had granted her license to live according to her own free will. "Therefore, within a short time, the king's palace itself—contrary to custom in such places—was changed, as it were, into a monastery of religion, and a shop where was practised all manner of discipline of more exact virtue and piety." But though the king thus fell in with her wishes, and they were so much of a mind that they lived together as brother and sister, yet Kyneburga was not satisfied, seeing nothing real or substantial in life, but the—

"One far off Divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

When, therefore, after a little while, she perceived the king to be sufficiently confirmed in this new course of piety, she departed with his leave to the monastery at Caistor, which she prepared for herself and other virgins, "where, changing her kind of life, she made the splendour and greatness of her former estate stoop to the plainness of humility, her riches to grow richer by a voluntary poverty, her delights to be an ordinary, slender diet, and instead of the ambitious train of her noble ladies of honour, she was accompanied with a few poor virgin nuns, with whom she led a virtuous and religious life under the rule of St. Benedict." Here for many years she presided over her convent, which, in those unsettled and semi-barbarous times, when inns, hospitals, and poor's houses were not, was—

"A refuge to the neighbouring poor,
And strangers led astray."

“The poore, needie, and afflicted,” says the pious Potter, in his life of these women, “had soe pious a mother of her, that she seemed borne for noe other end than to relieve their miserie. And yet did she not so excell in this one grace, as yf she were dead to all other virtues, for there was allmost noe prayre due unto a pious noble woman wherein she might not justly challenge her part, allwaies performing with a singular care and diligence whatsoever appertayned unto God, and His divine service.”

Meanwhile, her sister Kyneswitha, or Kyneswide (as the name is sometimes written), as yet but young, had not attained the “sacred vaill of religion, but waiting, as it were, at the chamber doore of her divine spouse, admired and imitated the sanctity of her sister so well, that she gave great signs and tokens of her own future sanctity. Wherein S. Kyneburg served her for a worthy pattern, or sample, whence she might take out the pious works and flowers of virtue and religion, being brought up under her government, in the sacred school of a virtuous, good life.”

Afterwards St. Kyneburg, says Porter, “being made Abesse of the same monastrie, it farre exceeds the force of weake words, and this poore penne to expresse, with what love she gayned soules to Christ’s service, with what care, being gained, she nourished them in the bosome of her charitie, and how watchful a guardian and teacher she was of the Divine lawes, and monasticall discipline; dayly heaping up a new encrease of virtues to her former; till at length she left this life, and made a happie journey unto Him, for whose sake she had forsaken the world, and the vanities thereof, leaving unto her doleful sisters manie worthy examples of charatie, and religion.”

Such is the account of the pious Kyneburga given by the monkish chroniclers, and in most respects it is probably near the truth. Other accounts, however, state that

she left one son, who, in due course, succeeded his father to the throne of Northumberland.

According to tradition Kyneburga passed away some years before her sister Kyneswitha. After her departure, Offa, King of the East Saxons, became wonderfully affected towards this holy pious nun, and earnestly desired to make her his wife and queen. She, however, says the monkish legend, refused to accede to his wishes, and implored the assistance of the Virgin Mother "to ridd her of these troubles." The latter, "appearing in a vision unto her, gave her counsell courageously to persist in her purpose of perpetual chastitie, promising withall to obtaine of her Sonne Jesus Christ, whom she had chose for her spouse, to grant her strength and help to her holy intentions." She persisted in her refusal. Offa finally approved of her counsel, and in his answer promised that her sacred vows should be ratified. The result was, we are told, that Offa himself "being overcome with the invincible virtue of the holy virgin, blushed to see a tender gyrl soe stoutly refuse such glory and riches, and grieving at his own subjection to vanitie, and reputing himself but as the slave of his kingdom, he overcame both it, and all the pompe of the world, and went to Rome, where he became a monk of Saint Benedict's order, and happily ended his daies in that holy state."

Here again the monkish legend differs in one respect from the account given by other chronicles. According to them Offa, who was the son of Sighere and of Queen Oswith his wife, and a man noted for "his comely feature and sweet countenance," succeeded Leofrid in the kingdom of the East Saxons in the year 701, and took to wife Kyneswitha, the daughter of Penda. He both enlarged with buildings and enriched with lands "the goodly and beautiful church of Westminster"; but after he had ruled

eight years, moved with supposed religious devotion, he abandoned Kyneswitha, his wife, his lands, kin, and country, and with Kenred, King of Mercia, and Edwine, Bishop of Worcester, went to Rome, where he was shorn a monk, and in that habit died, leaving his cousin, Selred, to succeed in his kingdom. Then it was that Kyneswitha "vowed herself a nunne" in the abbey of Kyneburg at Caistor.

The royal sisters had a kinswoman, named Tibba, who, we are informed, "lived manie years in the same monasterie, in soe high a degree of saineterie," that after her death she was, with them, accorded the honour of canonization. She died on St. Lucie's day, the 13th of December, as she herself, according to the legend, revealed in an apparition after her decease.

Kyneburga and Kyneswitha were buried at Caistor, where they both died; but in the time of Abbot Elsinus their bodies were translated from this church to Peterborough. That of Tibba was at the same time transferred to the same place from Ryall on the Wash. How it was that the remains of the saint came to be buried there tradition does not tell us. It is possible she may have become the head of a religious house there. This conjecture would appear to be borne out by the fact that at Ryall St. Tibba used to be held in particular veneration, as we are informed by Camden, in his account of Rutland. The anniversary of the translation of the saints Kyneburga, Kyneswitha, and Tibba, was wont to be celebrated by the monks of Peterborough on the 7th of March.

When the Danes wasted England, and especially the Eastern Counties, about the year 1013, and ransacked the monastery of Medeshamstead, the abbot and greater part of the convent fled for safety to Thorney, in Lincolnshire, which was connected with Peterborough; for we are told

in the legend which used to adorn the windows of the cloister there :—

“Saxulf, that here first abbot was,
For Ankereys at Thorney made a place.”

Thither they carried with them the relics of the three saints, which were accounted sacred by reason of their wonder-working powers. They were, however, brought back to Peterborough in the days of Henry I., who did all in his power to conciliate the Saxon element in his kingdom.

There was formerly a chapel in the south aisle of Peterborough Cathedral dedicated to St. Kyneburga, “who,” says Gunton in his history of that Minster, “probably was here buried, upon her removal from the church of Caistor.”

Now, of course, no trace of the ancient abbey is to be found at Caistor. Destroyed probably at the time when Medeshamstead, Crowland, and other religious establishments were laid waste by the Danes, it never again raised its head; but when Peterborough was rebuilt, the demesnes formerly appertaining to it were added to that foundation. The only memorials of St. Kyneburga at Caistor are the church, which is dedicated to her, and a ridge or balk, in “Caistor Field,” called Lady Conny-burrow’s Way, evidently a popular corruption of Kyneburga. Camden is of opinion that this way began near Water Newton, on the other side of the river, and was paved with cubical bricks or tiles. In Conegree Close also we have probably a similar corruption of the name Kyneburga.

The lives of these saintly women, who flourished about the end of the seventh century, are written by Bede, Ingulphus, William of Mahmsbury, and others.

Though, in these days, we have come to have other views of life, and, maybe, do not need "the dull society

Of your necessitated temperance,
Or that unnatural stupidity
That knows not joy nor sorrow ; nor your forced,
Falsely exalted, passive fortitude,"

we may, at the same time, admire the high self-denial that enabled royal women to forsake the world, and all its pleasures and distractions, to do good and live exemplary lives according to the highest standard of which their age knew.

II.

"Robyn was a proud outlawe,
Whyles he walked on the grounde,
So curteyse an outlawe as he was one,
Was never none y founde."

Of all the heroes of legend and romance, none can bear the palm with Robin Hood, the "proud outlawe." Even the mythical William Tell of the Forest Cantons—another hero of the bow—cannot compare, in respect to popularity, with Robin Hood, for the honour of whose birth there are almost as many claimants as for the nativity of Homer ; while England, Ireland, and Scotland take equal pride in recording national legends connected with him. Such being the esteem in which his memory, or the traditions respecting him, are held, it would be unpardonable, in making a collection of the legends of the county, to leave out one relating to so noted a character.

The story is that two upright stones, marked each with an arrow, standing near the Nene, in Caistor parish, were set up as marking two arrow flights from Alwalton, on the other side of the stream. "Upon a green ridge," says Morton, "still called St. Edmund's Balk, in Caistor Field,

descending to Gunwade Ferry, over which a bridge is now built, are two long stones, by the common people called Robin Hood and Little John, from the tradition of two arrows having been shot by these two old English worthies from Alwalton churchyard."

Mr. Gunton, in his history of Peterborough, has a theory which, if true, shows that the stones served at one time a more useful purpose than to adorn a romantic tale. According to him, they were set there as tokens that the carriage of stone from Barnack pits—whence the material for building the monasteries of Peterborough, Crowland, Thorney, Ramsey, and Bury St. Edmund's, was obtained—to be conveyed by Gunwade Ferry to St. Edmund's Bury, might pass that way without paying toll. Be this the right explanation of the origin of the stones or not, the Robin Hood legend that attaches to them is interesting, as indicating that we are on the borders of the country rendered famous by the exploits—partly mythic, and, in part, historical—of "Bold Robin" and "his mery maney." It is also interesting in another respect. Legends like these, which are met with in every part of these islands, are generally held to be good evidence of the great antiquity of the monuments to which they relate. In France, as in England, and indeed in most countries, they are usually connected in the popular fancy with fairies or demons—and in England, as in the case in point, with Robin Hood. At Whitby, for instance, there are two similar stones, respecting which the tradition is the same. Robin Hood and his squire, Little John, were famed for their archery, both being reputed to have frequently shot an arrow a measured mile, or 1,760 yards, which, it is supposed, no one, either before or since, was ever able to do; and on one occasion, so the story goes, Robin Hood, attended by his trusty mate, went to dine with the Abbot Richard (of

Whitby Abbey), who, having heard the common fame of their great dexterity in shooting with the longbow, begged them, after dinner, to show him a specimen thereof. Accordingly, to oblige their host, they went to the top of the abbey, "whence each of them shot an arrow, which fell not far from Whitby laths, but on the contrary side of the lane, and as memorial thereof a pillar was set up by the abbot in the place where each of the arrows was found." The stones, "which," says the account from which I quote, "are yet standing in these our days," are more than a measured mile distant from the abbey; and the fields in which they stand are called respectively Robin Hood's and Little John's field. In France, it is worthy of note, the former personage is replaced by Gargantua, a name made celebrated by the extraordinary romance of Rabelais. A cromlech near the village of Toury, in Brittany, is called Gargantua's stone; a not uncommon name for the single stone is *palet de Gargantua* (Gargantua's quoit).

It is not generally supposed that Robin Hood extended his peregrinations so far south as Northamptonshire, his favourite resorts being Sherwood Forest, "Bermysdale," in Yorkshire, and a certain part of Cumberland; nevertheless, we are told in "A Lytell Jeste of Robyn Hode" that he bade "Lytell Johan" and two others of his followers to go

"And walke up to the Sayles,
And so to Watlynge strete,"

the course of which, we know, was from Dover to Chester, through Northamptonshire. It, therefore, did not touch either the county of Nottingham or of York, nor went near the more northern one. Indeed, there is nothing at all improbable in the supposition that Northamptonshire, with its extensive forests, and its connection with the Fen

country to the north-west, was well known to the "good Robyn."

In a MS. in the British Museum, written, it is thought, towards the end of the sixteenth century, it is said Robin Hood "was borne at Lockesley, in Yorkshyre, or after others in Nottinghamshire." No trace of such a place as Locksley or Loxley (for it is spelled both ways) has been found in either the county of Nottingham or of York; but there is a Loxley in Warwickshire and another in Staffordshire ("near Needwood Forest, the manor and seat of the Kinardsleys"), and, accordingly, both these villages have disputed with Nottingham and York the distinction of being the native place of the "gentle robber." In support of the Warwickshire claim, several ingenious coincidences have been raised. In the collection of the late Robert Wheler, of Stratford, relating to Warwickshire antiquities, says Mr. Burgess, it is recorded that at the north side of Coughton church there is a window whereon is written, "under the portraits of divers men," the words: "This window was made, and these men following, with the money that Robin Hood and his men got."

Coughton church is almost within sight of Loxley, which is near Stratford, and on the borders of the forest of Arden. Another fact adduced by Mr. Burgess to strengthen the Sherwood hero's suggested connection with the Warwickshire Loxley adds another link connecting him with Northamptonshire. Robin Hood, according to the majority of his biographers, was born about the year 1160, and was of noble parentage, an earl, in fact, whose real name was Robert Fitzooth or Fitzodo. Dr. Stukeley traces his descent from Ralph Fitzooth (Odoth), a Norman who came to England with William Rufus, and wedded Maude de Gaunt, daughter of Gilbert Earl of Kyme and Lindsay. "This statement," says the authority above quoted, "may

or may not be worthy of credence, but it is worthy of remark that there was a Robert Fitzodo living at Loxley, then spelt Lockesley, at this time called the Earl of Huntingdon." Now, curiously enough, in some of the ballads of Robin Hood, and on the reputed tombstone at Kirklees, in Yorkshire, the hero is called Earl of Huntingdon; and it is still more curious, as Mr. Planché has pointed out, that in 1184 the earldom of Huntingdon, along with that of Northamptonshire, lapsed to the Crown on the death of Simon de St. Liz, and again in 1237, on the death of John Le Scot without issue. But all this will hardly rob Nottinghamshire of the honour accorded to it in the ballad :

"In Locksly town, in merry Nottinghamshire,
In merry, sweet Locksly town,
There bold Robin Hood was born and was bred,
Bold Robin of famous renown."

It should be remarked that Robin is the diminutive form of Robert, and that Hood is taken to be a corruption of Odo or Odoth, by those who hold to the Earl of Huntingdon theory. Dr. Percy objects thereto that in the most ancient poem there is no mention of an earldom; he is simply called a yeoman :

"I shall tell you of a good yeman,
His name was Robyn Hode."

So says the "Lytell Jeste," but he may, for all that, have been of noble birth. Could he have been on a visit to his sequestered earldom of Huntingdon when he and Little John shot each his arrow from Alwalton churchyard to St. Edmund's Balk, by Caistor field ?



Peakirk.

“Where once the lark, on fluttering wing,
Called drowsy brothers up to sing
Lands, matins, thanks to God above,
Now not a tongue is heard to move,
Unless of owls and birds of night,
Or dismal shrieks of haunting sprite.
Those sacred cells, where votaries were
In peaceful contemplative prayer,
Are lurking dens of wild beasts made ;
And foxes howl where hermits pray’d.”



N reading in the annals of the past, and judging
the lives and actions

“ of the simple great ones
Gone for ever and ever by,”

we should make large allowances for the differences in thought and sentiment which have been brought about by time. No praise attaches to us for being less superstitious, or perhaps more practical in our piety, than our forefathers of the early days. A man is homogeneous with the age in which he lives ; he incorporates its ideas and modes of contemplating things, as he drinks the milk of his babyhood, and takes in the stronger nourishment of his larger years. Our mental relation to the past, therefore, should not be one of contrasting our greater knowledge and our assumed superior intelligence with the intellectual state of given times and countries, but rather one of study as to whether we may not have lost something in the tran-

sition from one age to another which we might be the better for possessing. Such thoughts naturally suggest themselves as one reads the story of one like her who gave her name to the place which heads the chapter—one of whom we may say with Tennyson of his spotless recluse of the “Holy Grail”—

“ If ever holy maid,
With knees of adoration wore the stone,
A holy maid.”

The little village of Peakirk, close to the Lincolnshire border of Northants, forms a part of that country which, in times past, was the native home of legend and fairy lore. It takes its name from one Pega, a lady of the royal blood of the Mercian kings, who forsook the world and led an austere retired life in this neighbourhood, which afterwards bore her name. She was the sister of St. Guthlac, a holy man in the strictest sense of the word, whose name is more intimately identified with this part of the country, in the older annals, than that, perhaps, of any other man. He may truly, with his sister, be said to have been, in those rude savage days, one of those

“Who rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam.”

A strange and weird life was his in those uncultivated marshy wildernesses. At that time they possessed hardly one redeeming feature, save that during the short months of summer it was a garden of wild flowers. Very different is that land now, the effect of drainage and cultivation, a work begun by the monks, and carried on by those who succeeded them. The country, in particular at the confluence of the Nene and the Welland, was one vast fen, totally submerged, save here and there a little island, the most part of the year, and probably wholly uninhabited during

the long and terrible winters. "Ugly enough those winters must have been," says Kingsley, "what with snow and darkness, flood and ice, ague and rheumatism, while through the dreary winter's night the whistle of the wind and the wild cries of the water-fowl were translated into the howls of witches and demons; and (as in St. Guthlac's case) the delirious fancies of marsh fever made those fiends take hideous shapes before the inner eye, and act fantastic horrors round the fenman's bed of sedge."

What a change must have been wrought by the monks who were associated with, or followed St. Guthlac, when William of Malmsbury, writing in the first half of the twelfth century, could speak in such praise of these fenlands. Referring to Thorney abbey and its isle, he says, "It represents a very paradise; for that in pleasure and delight it resembles heaven itself. These marshes abound in trees, whose length, without a knot, doth emulate the stars. The plain there is as level as the sea, alluring the eye with its green grass, and so smooth that there is nought to trip the foot of him who runs through it. Neither is there any waste place; for in some parts are apples, in others vines, which are either spread on the ground or reared on poles. A mutual strife there is between Nature and Art; so that what one produces not the other supplies."

"Concerning St. Guthlac, one of the first to build his cell in these wastes, full details are on record, both in Anglo-Saxon and Latin." (I still quote from Kingsley.) "The author of the original document professes to be one Felix, a monk of Ramsey, who wrote possibly as early as the eighth century. There we may read how the young warrior-noble Guthlac ('The Battle Play,' 'The Sport of War'), tired of slaying and sinning, bethought him to fulfil the prodigies seen at his birth; how he wandered into the fen, where one Tatwin (who after became a saint

likewise) took him in his canoe to a spot so lovely as to be almost unknown, buried in reeds and alders, and how he found among the trees nought but an old 'law,' as the Scots still call a mound, which men of old had broken into seeking for treasures, and a little pond; and how he built himself a hermit's cell thereon, and saw visions and wrought miracles; and how men came to him, as to a fakir or shaman of the east; notably one Beccel, who acted as his servant; and how, as Beccel was shaving the Saint one day, there fell on him a great temptation. Why should he not cut St. Guthlac's throat, and install himself in his cell, that he might have the honour and glory of sainthood? But St. Guthlac perceived the inward temptation (which is told with the naïve honesty of those half-savage times), and rebuked the offender into confession, and all went well to the end. There we may read, too, a detailed account of the Fauna, now happily extinct in the fens, of the creatures that used to haul St. Guthlac out of his hut, drag him through the bogs, carry him aloft through frost and fire--*Develen und luther gostes* (devils and wicked spirits)—and who were supposed to haunt the meres and fens, and to have an especial fondness for old heathen barrows, with their fancied treasure-hoards. Now they 'filled the house with their coming and poured in on every side, from above and from beneath, and everywhere. They were in countenance horrible, and they tugged and led him out of the cot, and dragged him to the swart fen, and threw him in the muddy waters. After that they brought him into the wild places of the wilderness, among the thick beds of brambles, that all his body was torn. After that they took him and beat him with iron whips, and after that they brought him on their creaking wings between the cold regions of the air.'"

Then you may read in the old legend how all the wild

birds of the fen came to St. Guthlac, and he fed them after their kind ; how the ravens tormented him, stealing letters, gloves, and what not from his visitors, and then, seized with compunction at his reproofs, brought them back, or hanged them on the reeds ; and how, as Wilfrid, a holy visitant, was sitting with him, discoursing of the contemplative life, two swallows came flying in and lifted up their song, sitting now on the saint's hand, now on his shoulder, now on his knee, and how, when Wilfrid wondered thereat, Guthlac made answer, " Know ye not that he who hath led this life according to God's will, to him the wild birds draw the more near ? "

But after fifteen years of such a life, in fever, ague, and starvation, no wonder if St. Guthlac died. They buried him in a leaden coffin, which had been sent to him during his lifetime by a Saxon princess ; and then, over his sacred and wonder-working corpse, there arose a chapel, with a community of monks, companies of pilgrims who came to worship, and sick who came to be healed ; till at last, founded on great piles driven into the bog, arose the lofty wooden abbey of Crowland, in the " Sanctuary of the four rivers."

Such was the life and the work of the hermit Guthlac ; and not far distant from him, on the hither side of the Welland, his sister Pega, following his example, built for herself a cell,—

" A lonely sanctuary of the Saxon days."

There she spent her days in fasting and prayer, sometimes visiting or being visited by her brother, for mutual encouragement and exhortation. Not many are the personal reminiscences respecting St. Pega that have come down to us. We are told, however, that " St. Guthlac, foreknowing the time of his death, sent for his sister Pega,

who lived a recluse in another part of the fens, four leagues to the west. After this he fell sick of a fever, and on the seventh day of his illness, during which he had said mass every morning, he departed to our Lord, April 10th, 714, being 47 years old, of which he had passed fifteen in this island. His sister Pega buried his body as he desired; at which time a blind man recovered his sight by only washing his eyes with some water into which was put a little salt which the saint had blessed." A year after, we are told, when the lead coffin in which his remains were placed was opened, he was found like one asleep, his body uncorrupt, his joints as flexible as when he was alive, and all the clothes he was wrapped in as fresh and fair as on the day of his burial. His tomb was famed for many miracles, as may be seen in Ingulphus and other authors, who likewise bear testimony to the eminent virtues of his sister, Pega. She remained at Crowland for about a year after her brother's death. Then, leaving there, we are told, in the hands of Abbot Kenulph, the crutch of St. Bartholomew and the psalter of her brother, together with some other relics, she returned to her cell. After some two years or so devoted to meditation and prayer she made a pilgrimage to Rome, "to pray at the threshold of the holy apostle for herself and her kinsfolk, and she there triumphantly departed on the 6th of the Ides (8th of January)" of, or about, the year 719. So writes Odoricus Vitalis, who also tells us that her relics were honoured with miracles, and kept in a church, which bore her name, in Rome. The church, however, is not known. A curious legend is related of her entry into the Eternal City. After causing all the bells to ring for the space of one hour, she "proclaimed to the citizens the merits of her sanctity."

Such is about the sum of what we know of St. Pega, or St. Pee, as she is called in North Northamptonshire.

After her death a conventual establishment grew up on the site of her humble cell,

“Built with wattles from the marsh,”

called St. Pega's Monastery, the nucleus of which had no doubt been gathered about her ere she left for Rome.

The adjacent village of Peakirk, that is, the kirk or church of St. Pee, was a noted place in the Anglo-Saxon times. The chronicles state that after that part of the country had been depopulated by the Danes in 871, Gored, King of Mercia, seized the territories belonging to Peakirk, along with those attached to other religious houses. Peakirk afterwards held several neighbouring manors, which were stated by Ingulphus, in 1013, to have been included in the district which had been entirely destroyed by King Sweyn, who landed with a powerful army in 1010. St. Pega was also titular saint of a church and monastery in Pegeland, which St. Edward the Confessor united to Crowland.

St. Pee is not to be confounded with St. Bega, or St. Bees, who is commemorated on September the 8th.

What particulars we have of this peculiarly Northamptonshire saint are to be found in the English Martyrologies, Felix of Crowland, Florence of Worcester, Ingulphus, and Odericus Vitalis.





Stowe.

“ When evening’s dusky star,
Crowned with her dewy car,
Steals o’er the fading sky in shadowy flight ;
On leaves of aspen trees
We tremble to the breeze,
Veiled from the grosser ken of mortal sight.
* * * * *

Or through the mystic ringlets of the vale
We flash our fairy feet in gamesome prank.”



HERE is a fanciful legend connected with the popular adjunct to the name of Stowe, which gives us a pleasing glimpse into the simple beliefs of olden time, and affords a striking example of the change that has since then taken place in our forms of thought. The village is commonly called Stowe-nine-Churches, and the tradition of the neighbourhood says it got the addition to it in this wise. In days of yore, a certain lord of the manor determined to build a church in his native parish, at that time bearing the simple appellation of Stowe. A convenient place was chosen for the site by the pious projector, the requisite workmen were procured, and the foundations duly marked out and begun. Some necessary rite, or all-important consideration, however, was apparently forgotten or neglected, and matters did not go on as they should have done. Maybe the *genius loci* was not propitiated ; or possibly the site chosen was consecrate to the uses of elves or fairies, or other

night-haunting creatures, and they resented such intrusion by mortal man without so much as "by your leave." Whatever the fault, certain it is that on the morning following the first breaking of the sod and beginning of the work, when labour was to be resumed not a trace of yesterday's efforts was visible. Tools, trenches, hewn stones—all had vanished, and the sward was as though it had not been touched by measuring-rod or spade. Here was a pretty prank! Either Puck, or some unhallowed goblin—possibly Boggart (so well known to Northamptonshire children)—had been at work. The workmen, we may well imagine, were for giving up the job, or, at least, for relinquishing the "uncanny" spot as a site. Not so the lord of the manor. He was not to be baulked so easily, and, probably to reassure his timorous work-folk, he got the nearest priest to come with "bell and book," to exorcise the place. Search was then made for the missing tools and building material, which, after a time, were discovered some distance away, on the spot where the church now stands. The lord of the manor had everything carried back to the selected site, and the foundations were once more begun. During the night, however, the space was again cleared as before. Nine times did he renew his attempt, and as often was his will frustrated by invisible hands, which continued to remove and undo in the night all that the workmen had done during the day.

What was to be done? The founder did not like to be beaten; but he was powerless against his invisible nocturnal foes. Watching had been in vain: it was only some, specially gifted, who were able to see the night-time doings and revelries "of fairy folk and goblins weird." At length, however, a rustic clown, with the necessary charm against ill, was lighted upon, and induced to watch these midnight proceedings; and the result was the report

that the traverser of the good lord's design was—*Mirabile dictu*!—an object “summat bigger nor a hog.” After this the attempt to build on the site originally selected was abandoned in despair, and the church was erected on the spot thus persistently and marvellously indicated; for tools and material were always removed to the same place.

The form of the hog was one of Puck's numerous disguises. Thus we read in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* :

“ Sometimes a horse I'll be, sometimes a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometimes a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, and fire, at every turn.”

So also in *Robin Goodfellow: his Pranks and Merry Jests* (reprinted by the Percy Society), we read :

“ Thou hast the power to change thy shape
To horse, to hog, to dog, to ape.”

Similar traditions are related in connection with the origin of many churches and other buildings in different parts of Great Britain. Mr. Chambers, in his *Popular Rhymes*, records several instances of the kind related in connection with places in Scotland. For instance, when the workmen were engaged in erecting the ancient church of Old Deer, in Aberdeenshire, upon a small hill called Birsan, they were surprised to find that the work was impeded by supernatural obstacles. At length the spirit of the river was heard to say :

“ It is not here, it is not here
That ye shall build the church of Deer;
But on Taptillery,
Where many a corpse shall lie.”

The site of the edifice was accordingly transferred to Taptillery, an eminence at some distance from the place where

the building had been commenced. A similar example of the agency of this class of spirits is cited with respect to the church of Fordun, in Kincardineshire. The people say that the site originally chosen was the top of the Knock Hill, about a mile north-east of the village. After the walls had for some time been regularly thrown down every night by unseen spirits, a voice was heard to say :

“Gang farther down
To Fordun’s town.”

It is said that the new site was chosen by throwing at random with a mason’s hammer. A number of other legends of a like character might be given ; as, for instance, one relating to Rochdale church, or to Brighton church, in Sussex, or Ambrosden, in Buckinghamshire, or those relating to Great Brington and Oxenden churches, in our own county, both of which, it is said, were originally intended to have been built on sites some distance from the existing edifices. It will suffice, however, to mention one more—the one, namely, related in connection with the church of Trentham, in Staffordshire, of interest to us from the fact of it having been at that place that St. Werburg, of Weedon, had a cloister of nuns under her charge. The legend goes that the site originally selected for the church was an eminence some distance away. As in the case of Stowe, however, tools and materials were spirited away in the night, and deposited on the spot where the church now stands. Time after time, to the number of nine, they were reconveyed to the site first selected, only, however, to be again, ere morning, transferred to Trentham. In this case the nocturnal agent was not “Summat bigger nor a hog,” but a host of white mice.

But, alas, for the credibility of these fables ! Baker gives us a very matter-of-fact origin of the appellation

“Nine Churches.” “Stowe,” he says, “received its adjunct of ‘Nine Churches’ because there were nine advowsons appendant to the manor.” According to the inquisition after the death of Dame Katherine Dudley, in the reign of Henry VII., there were nine advowsons to this manor. The tales, however, are interesting, as exhibiting the simple method our forefathers had of accounting for anything a little unusual or extraordinary, and the implicit faith they put in the agency of uncanny or superhuman beings.

II.

“A little, lowly hermitage it was
 Downe in a dale, hard by a forest’s side,
 Far from resort by people that did pass
 In travall to and froe : a little wyde
 There was a holy Chappell edified,
 Wherein the hermite dewly wont to say
 His holy things each morn and eventyde ;
 Thereby a cristall stream did gently play,
 Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.”

There is another old-time legend connected with the pleasantly situated village of Stowe, which, though less fabulous in its nature, touches, perhaps, a deeper chord in the human heart. In the neighbourhood a holy hermit, named Alnoth, formerly had a cell, and for many years led in it a lonely and abstemious life.

“Far in a wilderness obscure
 The lonely mansion lay ;”

for the face of the country, be it remembered, was very different then to what it is now. The whole land was largely covered with wood, and Northants in particular may be described as forming one vast forest. Alnoth had formerly been a herdsman, or, according to some accounts, the bailiff of St. Werburg, of Weedon, in whose service he

remained until her death. Many stories are told of his piety and humility. The following is a specimen :—

A herdsman, says Jerome Porter, belonging unto her monastery, called Alnothus, a man of very good life, was often times much injured, and at length, in presence of the Holy Virgin, sorely beaten and wounded by the bailiff of the same place, all of which the good man quietly bore off with the buckler of patience ; whilst St. Werburg on her knees, with prayers mingled with threatenings, cried out on him to spare the poor innocent : but his fury and pride swelling in her humility, disdained to list to her pious entreaties, but pursued his rude cruelties ; when, by the just judgment of God, he received his punishment : for presently his stubborn neck and frowning visage was, after a horrid manner, writhen and turned backwards to look behind him, since he refused a good look to the servant of God which kneeled for pity before Him. This made his stout heart to relent, and, throwing himself prostrate at her feet, with repentant tears, he demanded pardon of his offence, so that she, from a defendant became a judge, by whose mediation and suffrage unto the Eternal Judge, he had his face restored unto the ancient seat again.

It was probably this holy herdsman who was an actor in the miraculous goose-drama, which took place in St. Werburg's time, at Weedon, as related under that head. The monkish chronicles narrate how a herdsman of the monastery came and told the saintly abbess that immense flocks of wild geese were making sad havoc in the corn-fields ; whereupon she bade him go and impound the intruders, and he did so, the geese demurely waddling into the enclosure chosen for their incarceration, and making no effort to escape. "Never," says the account from which we quote, "was so large a quantity of birds got together in one place before" — certainly never with so little ado. The

sacrilegious fowls were kept in durance for the night, and, with the break of day, were conjured by the "most religious mayd," Werburg, never to descend upon "Weedon field" again, and were then set at liberty.

These miraculous doings it probably was which led Alnoth, on the death of St. Werburga, to adopt the contemplative life, and make ready by fasting and prayer for—

"that great world afar,
That fills and rounds our little life below."

How long he lived his solitary and eremitical life in his forest cell we are not told ; but he had reached a good old age when, suspected probably of having some hoarded wealth, he was set upon and murdered by a band of thieves that haunted the wilds. His relics were preserved with great veneration in the church at Stowe, and in after years his name was enrolled in the calendar of saints. His festival is placed on the 27th of February, in Wilson's first edition of the *English Martyrology*, but in the second, on the 25th of November.





Brackley.

“ It is but a legend, I know,—
A fable, a phantom, a show.

* * * * *

Yet the old mediæval tradition,
The beautiful, strange superstition,
But haunts me and holds me the more.”



RACKLEY, too, has its legends—legends of the old feudal days, when war was the trade of the rich and noble, and the penance of the simple and lowly. It was here, for instance, that the barons assembled with their bowmen and men-at-arms, when King John's tyranny compelled them to resort to the arbitrament of the sword for a reasonable settlement of their grievances. Here, too, jousts were held by royal license; and, doubtless, within the lists erected on Bayard's (probably a popular corruption of “Bear Yards”) Heath, many a grievous wound was given and received in the courtly pastime of those days, when it was “sport for ladies” to see gallant knights meet in deadly shock. It is not, however, of such we purpose now to speak, but rather of legends of a still more antique type.

There is a curious tradition, by-the-way, related by Leland, in connection with St. Peter's church, which affords a striking insight into the semi-savagery of “the good old times.” “In the church yearde,” he says, “lyeth an Image of a Priest revestid; the which was Vicar of

Barkeley (an old spelling of the name), and there buried quicke by the Tyranny of a Lord of the Towne for a Displeasure that he tooke with him for an Horse taken, as some say, for a Mortuarie. But the Lord, as it is there seyde, went to Rome for Absolution and toke greate Repentences." The story, so far as we are aware, is not recorded by any other old writer.

Brackley was not a little famous, in former days, for the memory of Rumbald, a young infant, who (as we read in his life) was a king's son, and who, as soon as he was born (in this place), spoke I know not what holy words, and that after having professed himself a Christian, and been baptized, immediately expired. So says the veracious Camden. According to the old monkish legends, the infant St. Rumbald, or Rumboalde, as it is sometimes written, was the son of a daughter of Penda, King of the Mercians, and was born at King's Sutton, on the 1st of November (according to others on the 1st of March), 662. The father, Rumbald, King of Northumberland, was a Pagan, but was converted by the prayers of his wife before the marriage was consummated. The child was baptized by Bishop Widerino, assisted by Eadwold, a priest, and lived only three days. He was buried at Sutton, by Eadwold, but was translated the following year to Brackley, and the third year after his death to Buckingham, where a shrine was erected for him in the church, to which great resort was made by pilgrims. Leland, in his notice of King's Sutton, says:—"St. Rumoalde was born in this Paroch. There was of late a Chappell dedicated to him, standing about a mile from Sutton in the Medes, defaced and taken down." It stood in what was, until lately, and perhaps still is, called the Chapel-field, near the principal farm-house in Walton grounds, and the site is still marked by vestiges of old foundations.

The legend of St. Rumbald of Brackley, which probably rests on equal authority with relations of a similar description, must be carefully separated from the traditions that have come down to us of another Rumbald, or Rumwold, who, in the eighth century, quitted his cell in Britain, in order to go and preach the gospel in unconverted parts of Europe, and died a martyr in 775. His body was contemptuously thrown into a river, but was afterwards taken out and honourably buried by the Count of Adon, in or near Mechlin, in Flanders. Those who are acquainted with Southey's works will recall his spirited translation of the ballad of St. Rumbald, and how—

“ Satan used to maul him like a Turk.
 There they would sometimes fight,
 All through a winter's night,
 From sunset until morn—
 He with his cross, the devil with his horn.”

The ballad goes on to recount how a plot was laid to secure the relics of the saint for a certain town, and how Rumbald frustrated the design, having no immediate desire for the crown of martyrdom. An innkeeper tells the story to a traveller:—

“ We thought, perhaps, that he one day might leave us ;
 And then, should strangers have the good man's grave,
 A loss like that would naturally grieve us,
 For he'll be made a saint of to be sure ;
 Wherefore we thought it prudent to secure
 His relics while we might ;
 And so we meant to strangle him one night.”

In spite of their good, business-like intentions, however, Rumbald disappointed the thrifty townsfolk, and his relics, as we have seen, subsequently became the possession of Mechlin, where they no doubt yet retain as much virtue as of old.

But strong as are the claims of St. Rumbald, of Flanders, to saintly honours, they fall short of those of the infant prodigy of Brackley. Almost immediately after its birth, we are told, the wonderful child spoke, and proclaimed itself a Christian, and gave directions for its baptism, as well as pronounced a long sermon, in which Scripture was largely quoted. It was baptized in water contained in a hollow stone lying in a field at King's Sutton. Rumbald lived but three days, as he himself predicted he would, at the same time giving directions for his burial. On his death his body was to remain one year at Sutton, two at "Bratalea," and then to be removed to Buckingham, there to rest for ever. The wish was carried out to the letter.

There are some slight discrepancies in the different accounts of the saint. Leland, for instance, differs from those who assign his birth to Northants or Bucks (some affirming that he was born at Buckingham), asserting that, if born in either of those counties, he was baptized at Southampton, and was buried there, but was the next year translated to Brackley, and thence to Buckingham. Of course, in the event of such a wonderful child, one need not take exception to one marvel more than another. After the translation of his remains to Buckingham, he was canonized. Capgrave tells us that, at the saint's intercession, many miracles were wrought, such as the restoring of sight to the blind and making the lame to walk; but he gives no particulars.

At Brackley a salubrious spring obtained, and still bears, his name. "There be two faire springs or wells," says Leland, "a little west-north-west from St. Peter's Church. The one of them is callyd St. Rumdale's Well, wher they say that with in a fewe Dayes of his Birth he prechid." The Buckingham people claim that this occurrence took place at that town, where to this day his fame is not only

preserved by the shrine, reared by the devotion of his followers, but in the name of Well Street and St. Rumbold's Lane, evidently connected with traditions of the infant saint.

John Capgrave gives the most circumstantial account of St. Rumbold in his *Vita Sanctorum*.





Whittlebury.

“ Hail, greenwood shades, that stretching far,
Defy e'en summer's noontide power,
When August, in his burning car,
Withholds the cloud, withholds the shower,
The deep-toned low from either hill,
Down hazel aisles and arches green,
(The herds' rude track from rill to rill,)
Roared echoing through the solemn scene.”



WHITTLEWOOD, which was formerly of much greater extent than it is now—covering at a comparatively late period, we are told, some thirty-two square miles of “Northamptonian earth”—was one of the favourite hunting resorts of our early kings, who had a kind of hunting lodge at Silverstone, where they resided on the occasions of their visits. The site thereof is still traditionally denoted, says Baker, by the name of “King's Hill Coppice,” in the Silverstone portion of Haselborough Walk. King John appears to have been especially fond of hunting in Northamptonshire, as mention of him in connection with Whittlebury Forest is made in several ancient documents. Richard Cœur de Lion, Henry the Third, and Edward the First also, we know, made Silverstone their place of residence when they went to “Wytlewood” to enjoy the pleasures of the chase.

Whittlebury Forest was a famous place, too, in Saxon

times, when it was of immense extent, and we have records of more than one fierce battle fought within its boundaries. Several memorials of the Saxon owner previous to the Norman Conquest still exist, or did till within a year or two ago. For, unfortunately, "Wake's Oak," that venerable and interesting ornament of the forest, no longer rears its quaint trunk and wide-spreading branches near the gate leading to Puxley (having been burned down by some mischievous school-boys); and the moonlight-loving fairies have thus lost another favourite haunt.

"Where was thy elfin train that play
Round Wake's huge oak, their favourite tree?
May a poor son of song thus say,
Why were they not reveal'd to me?"

Thus wrote Bloomfield when—a guest of the Duke of Grafton of his day, who was his munificent patron—he sought inspiration and that pensive meditation so congenial to poetic minds, in the aisles of the old forest. But one abiding memorial of the Wake still remains—Wakefield Lawn, that is, Wake's field, or fell'd, designating that portion of the forest which had been cleared (*i.e.*, felled) to make room for the Saxon Thane's residence.

Well does the writer of these lines remember his first visit to the grand old forest, with its long grassy "walks," its fine old trees, its mossy fells, and its glittering brook-lets:

"From beds of clay, here creeping rills
Unseen to parent Ouse would steal;
Or, gushing from the northward hills,
Would glitter through Tove's winding dale."

It was a late summer day, and his chance companion, picked up by the way, was one learned in all local things, from the rare butterfly to be found among the tree tops to the most abstruse point of antiquarian research. Twilight

fell before we got without the purlieu of the wood, and, as we trudged along, the way was shortened by many a tale of the old forest, told by the native swain. It was calculated to make one feel a little "unkid" (one may be pardoned for using a precious Northamptonshire provincialism in speaking of the county) to hear tell how belated rustics had been terrified by the sight of the "headless horseman," riding silently along the grass-grown wayside, beneath the pale glimmer of the stars, or the weird shimmer of the moon, and disappearing as soon as seen; and how the apparition was a sign of bad luck, or even of death; or how the spectral huntsman and his fiendish crew—"des wilden Heeres Jagd" of the German peasantry—were still to be seen by those venturesome enough to tread the woodland path after nightfall; and woe to him who should cross the path of the goblin pack!

A bright but gusty day had changed to a wet and blustery night, and a drop of "something warm" at the village inn to keep out the cold gave the opportunity for drawing more of this legendary kind of lore from one who, while he had learned to be sceptical, was still an interested treasurer of those "old world fancies." The writer was at that time totally unacquainted with the legendary and folk lore of the county, and the recurrence of an old friend like the Wild Huntsman of the German *Maerchen*, and the Italian legend as given in Boccaccio's *Nastagio and Traversari*, was both a surprise and a pleasure, and he could not help repeating, on the road to the nearest railway station, to the accompaniment of the wind's symphony, the words of Bürger's ballad of the *Wilde Jäger*:

"What ghastly Huntsman next arose,
Well may I guess, but dare not tell:
His eye like midnight lightning glows,
His steed the swarthy line of hell.

The wildgrave flies o'er bush and thorn,
With many a shriek of helpless woe ;
Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
And 'Hark away ! and holla ho !' "

Mr. Sternberg says the superstition of the ascephalous horseman is known throughout the county, but the writer has only met with it here. The same industrious authority tells us that the goblin huntsman and his train are known to the good people of the country by the name of the "wild men," "wild hounds," etc. Rockingham, as well as Whittlebury, contends for the honour of the Wild Huntsman's residence, and the weird whoop with which he incites his hounds is still said to be heard among the glades of both forests. Be that as it may, the writer was assured by his enlightened bucolic friend that there were still old folk living within Whittlewood district who averred that they had seen or heard these nocturnal visitants.

Whittlewood is rich in legends. Indeed, neither Sherwood nor the New Forest can boast a wilder set than this extensive woodland district. Rangers of ancient date, we are told, may still be seen in their quaint dresses of Lincoln green dashing across the glades on fiery steeds, and cheering their hell-hounds with unearthly glee. The poet Dryden, "the father of all the nine," is supposed to have got the idea of the spectre hunt he describes in his poem of "Theodore and Honoria," from a tragic legend which still clings to Whittlewood, and which the bard doubtless often heard during his residence in the county. A lady of great beauty, daughter of one of the noble rangers of the forest, inspired a gallant young knight with a most devoted attachment. She was, however, a heartless coquette, and though at first she seemed to reciprocate his passion and encouraged his suit, the unhappy youth was at length treated with the utmost coldness and disdain. He per-

severed in his attentions, however, in the fond hope that former kindnesses might be renewed, but in vain. The more attached and devoted he showed himself, the more he was despised and hated.

“ What did I not her stubborn heart to gain ?
But all my vows were answered with disdain ;
She scorned my sorrow, and despised my pain.”

Driven to desperation by the lady's treatment, Guido (to use the name given the youth by Dryden, who translates his story to Italian soil) at length put an end to his wretched existence :—

“ Long time I dragged my days in fruitless care,
Then, loathing life, and plunged in deep despair,
To finish my unhappy life, I fell
On this sharp sword, and now am damned in hell.”

The lady, proud of the power of her charms, gloried in her hapless lover's suicide, even while she felt a momentary pang of pity ; for the hardest human heart is not without some tender chord, though, like the giant's harp, it may take a storm to touch it. But mark the retribution ! The cruel fair one does not long outlive her woeful suitor ; and no sooner do the shades of death close upon her than she is confronted with the spirit of her dead lover, by whom she is doomed to be eternally pursued, and relentlessly slain :—

“ And, as in unrepented sin she died,
Doomed to the same bad place, is punished for her pride ;
Because she deemed I well deserved to die,
And made a merit of her cruelty.
There, then, we met : both tried, and both were cast,
And this irrevocable sentence passed :
That she whom I so long pursued in vain,
Should suffer from my hands a ling'ring pain ;

Renewed to life that she may daily die,
 I daily doomed to follow, she to fly ;
 No more a lover, but a mortal foe,
 I seek her life (for love is none below) ;
 As often as my hounds, with better speed,
 Arrest her flight, is she to death decreed ;
 Then with this fatal sword, on which I died,
 I pierce her open back, or tender side,
 And tear that hardened heart from out her breast,
 Which, with her entrails, make my hungry hounds a feast ;
 Nor lies she long, but, as her fates ordain,
 Springs up to life, and fresh to second pain,
 Is saved to-day, to-morrow to be slain."

Dryden makes use of the poetic license to alter the common story. Instead of the lady's doom being to be hunted eternally by the demon knight, he makes her to be pursued for but a term of years, according to the number of months he suffered :—

" As many months as I sustained her hate,
 So many years she is condemned by fate
 To daily death ; and every several place,
 Conscious of her disdain and my disgrace,
 Must witness her just punishment, and be
 A scene of triumph and revenge to me !"

In the original *Maerchen* the spectre huntsman is destined to pursue, and the victim to be pursued, until the judgment day :

" Still, still shall last the dreadful chase,
 Till time itself shall have an end ;
 By day, they scour earth's cavern'd space,
 At midnight's witching hour ascend."

The ill-fated lady is no sooner overtaken and slain, and has given up the ghost, than she returns to life again, and

escapes from her relentless human and canine pursuers, to become again their victim on the next appointed day.

“ Thus, while he spoke, the virgin from the ground
Upstarted fresh, already closed the wound,
And, unconcerned for all she felt before,
Precipitates her flight along the shore ;
The hell-hounds, as ungorged with flesh and blood,
Pursue their prey, and seek their wonted food :
The fiend remounts his courser, mends his pace,
And all the vision vanished from the place.”

The story, in modified or amplified form, is to be found among nearly every people—at least among every branch of the great Arian race—and embodies the idea of justice of our rude forefathers, with whom mercy had small recognition, while revenge was considered a Divine law. The theory, therefore, that the Whittlebury legend of the midnight revelries of goblin huntsmen and their hounds may be traced to deer-stealers of olden times, who, to escape detection, gave rise to, and encouraged, a superstition, which, in course of time, became traditionary in the forest, though plausible, will hardly bear close scrutiny. The forest of Whittlebury has, doubtless, been well stocked with deer since the days of the first kings of England, and the bold men who dared the pains and penalties for poaching may have found their advantage in encouraging superstitions that made the midnight woods the haunt of beings that had long since passed from this lower world ; but one generally finds that men of this class are not the least addicted to such weird night fancies, just as sailors have the most superstitions of the sea.

Centuries have elapsed since the forest of Whittlebury was the scene of royal diversions ; stag and deer hunting have long ceased ; but the aisles of merry Whittlewood still resound to the “ hounds and horns ” of the Grafton

hunt ; and although the sylvan stretch diminishes almost year by year, we may fervently hope that it will still be long ere one must cease to say with the poet :

“ I could rove
At morn, at noon, at eve, by lunar ray,
In each returning season through your shades,
Ye reverend woods ! could visit every dell,
Each hill, each breezy lawn, and wandering brook,
And bid the world admire.”





Grafton.

I.

“ I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage,
My gay apparel for an alms man's gown,
My figur'd goblets for a dish of wood,
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff,
My subjects for a pair of carved saints,
And my large kingdom for a little grave—
A little, little grave, an obscure grave.”



HE annals of Northamptonshire are replete with reminiscences of royalty. To Grafton belongs the honour of being associated in history with one of the most important “epoch-making” events in our national career; with the event, namely, which resulted in the union of the Houses of York and Lancaster, and blessed at length our long-distracted country—

“ with smooth-fac'd peace,
With smiling plenty, and fair prosperous days.”

In the early part of the fifteenth century Grafton was owned by one Richard Woodville, or Widdeville, as it is written in the older narratives, a squire of Henry V., and accounted the handsomest man in England. So handsome, indeed, was he, that he captivated the heart of the fair Duchess of Bedford, who had been a widow some short

time, and who so far sacrificed her ambition as to wed an humble squire, causing almost as much gentle wonder at the archery of the young wag Cupid as was fabled of old,

“When he shot so true
That King Cophetua wed the beggar maid ;”

for the Duchess of Bedford might have aspired much higher, not only on account of the position she acquired by her first marriage, but because she was a princess of Luxembourg by birth. This marriage, we are told, was brought about by the accident of Sir Richard Woodville being appointed commander of the guard which escorted the young Duchess of Bedford to England from France, where her husband had died, after having prosecuted the war against Joan of Arc. The union was kept secret for several years—for five, say some—and when it was discovered the king (Henry VI.) was so wroth that he imposed a heavy fine on Woodville, and sequestered the dowry of the duchess. At Grafton House, where they generally resided, several children were born to them before the secret of the marriage was divulged. Elizabeth, the eldest of their daughters, and the subject of this chapter, was one of them there born, or, as Fuller quaintly puts it:—“Sure if this Grafton saw her not first a child, it beheld her first a queen, when married to King Edward the Fourth.” She became maid-of-honour to Queen Margaret, little deeming, of a surety, that she would one day fill her place on the throne. About her twenty-first year she accepted the hand and fortunes of John Gray, the heir of the illustrious and wealthy lordship of Ferrers of Groby. Gray, Lord Ferrers, who was firmly attached to the House of Lancaster, commanded the cavalry of the dauntless Queen Margaret at the second battle of St. Albans (February 17, 1460-1), which for a short space made the Rêd

Rose triumphant. Shortly afterwards, however, he died of the injuries he there received, leaving two infant sons, Thomas, afterwards Marquis of Dorset, and Richard. Being a zealous Lancastrian, his estates were confiscated by the victorious Edward, and his young and beautiful widow was obliged to return to her paternal home at Grafton.

“Grim-visag’d war” having now “smooth’d his wrinkled front,” and the king having no longer any enemy to dread, he turned his attention to a suitable matrimonial alliance, and the warlike Earl of Warwick was despatched to Paris to negotiate a marriage with Bona of Savoy, sister of the Queen of France. The mission was successful; but meanwhile a train of circumstances had occurred which caused state policy to be sacrificed to love. Edward was much under the influence of the tender passion, which he, on his part, was greatly calculated to inspire, because of the amiability of his mind and the beauty of his person. So renowned, indeed, was he for the latter attribute, that he was called the “Rose of Rouen” (where he was born), by which epithet he was designated in the ballad poetry of the time. One of his coronation songs begins with the allusion:—

“Now is the Rose of Rouen grown to great honour,
Therefore sing we everyone y-blessed be that flower.”

Being addicted to the pleasures of the chase, and having repaired to the royal hunting grounds of Whittlebury forest, in order to get rid of some of the leisure which these “piping times of peace” threw on his hands, he there met and became enamoured of the charming Elizabeth Gray. Their first interview, according to Holinshed and other chroniclers, took place at Grafton House, where Edward repaired after the chase to visit the Duchess of Bedford and Lord Rivers. This, however, is scarcely con-

sistent with probability, as the latter were adherents of the rival Royal House, as well as their daughter, whose children had been deprived of their inheritance. The popular tradition of the neighbourhood is, doubtless, more in accordance with fact. The story goes that the lovely and bereaved widow sought the young monarch in the forest for the purpose of petitioning him for the restoration of her husband's lands to her and her impoverished children. The scene of the interview is still pointed out, it having taken place beneath the shade of an oak tree, standing in the direct track of communication between Grafton House and Whittlebury forest. From the circumstance, it acquired the name of the "Queen's Oak," and its hollow, weather-beaten trunk still rears its hoary head, amid younger and fresher brethren, "a venerable witness of one of the most romantic facts that history records."

Ignorant of the king's person, Elizabeth inquired of the young stranger if he could direct her where she could find him, whereupon he told her he himself was the object of her search. Throwing herself at his feet, she implored his compassion on herself and her poor children. Edward raised her from the ground with assurances of favour and protection. Charmed with her personal appearance and manners, he accompanied her home, and in his turn became a suitor for favours that could only be granted at the price of honour. Elizabeth Gray was too noble and virtuous a woman to descend to anything like this; and when Edward persisted in his entreaties, promises, and endearments, she plainly told him that though she might be unworthy to be his wife, she thought herself too good for a less honourable position in respect to him, and would, therefore, remain in the humble position to which Providence had reduced her. Finding her virtue inflexible, the king yielded to the force of passion, and went from Stony Stratford to Grafton,

early in the morning of the 1st of May (1464), and was privately married there by a priest.

There are those, be it said, who see in this affair a green young king caught in the well-laid trap of a pretty and artful woman and her designing mother. The marriage is thus described in the quaint words of Fabyan, a chronicler of that time :—"In most secret manner, upon the 1st of May, 1464, King Edward spoused Elizabeth, late being wife of Sir John Gray. Which spousailles were solemnised early in the morning at the town called Grafton, near to Stoney-Stratford. At which marriage was none present but the spouse, the spousesse, the Duchess of Bedford, her mother; the priest, and two gentlewomen, and a young man who helped the priest to sing. After the spousailles, the king rode again to Stoney-Stratford, as if he had been hunting, and then returned at night. And within a day or two the king sent to Lord Rivers, father to his bride, saying that he would come to lodge with him for a season; when he was received with all due honours, and tarried there four days, . . . and so the marriage was kept secret till it needs must be discovered, because of the princesses being offered as wives to the king."

The account goes on to relate how some obloquy attended this marriage, because, as it was asserted, the king must have been enchanted by the Duchess of Bedford, or he would have refused to acknowledge her daughter. This charge of witchcraft against Jaqueline of Luxembourg subsequently took rather a threatening form, in consequence of a certain "Thomas Wake, 'squier" (of Blisworth) having laid before the king at Warwick "a image of lede made lyke a man of armes, conteynyng the lengthe of a mannes fynger, and broken in the myddes, and made fast with a wyre, saying it was made by 'the Duchess' to use with witchcraft and sorsory." An inquiry being made into

the accusation it turned out that an "ymage of led," purporting to be made by the duchess, was found in the possession of "oon John Daunger, parishe clerk of Stoke Brewerne," and that by means of it she "fixed the love of the king on her daughter Elizabeth." The upshot of the inquiry was that the duchess was "clerid and declared of the noises and disclaundres" against her. The charge, however, was revived after Edward's decease, when Gloucester, afterwards Richard III., anxious to make a good title to the crown by proving the illegitimacy of his brother's children, gave currency to the allegation that the "pretensed marriage betwixt the king and Elizabeth Grey" was brought about "by sorcerie and wichecraft." It will be remembered by the readers of Shakespeare that Richard is represented by him as attributing witchcraft to Elizabeth also. In the celebrated scene in the Tower, where he bares his withered arm, he exclaims ;—

" Look how I am bewitch'd ; behold mine arm
Is, like a blasted sapling, withered up :
And this is Edward's wife, that monstrous witch."

But to return to our narrative. It will not be doubted by any at the present day that the only witchery which Elizabeth exercised over the king was the witchery of her beauty and of her amiable disposition. The marriage was kept a profound secret. Edward was only twenty-two years of age when he formed this impolitic and imprudent connection, and at first he had not sufficient resolution to brave the burst of dissatisfaction which he felt sure it would give rise to among certain of his subjects ; but, weary of constraint, he at length publicly avowed his marriage. This took place on Michaelmas-day following, when Elizabeth was led by the unfortunate Duke of Clarence to the chapel of the abbey of Reading, and there proclaimed

queen. Contrary to Edward's anticipations, the marriage was hailed with satisfaction by the generality of his English subjects, much in the same manner as the recent marriage of the Princess Louise with a subject gave general satisfaction throughout the Three Kingdoms, because then, as now, it had been a thing unheard of to break "that high and stately etiquette . . . which forbade a king or kaiser to mate with partners below the rank of princess." So writes Miss Strickland; but it ought not to be forgotten that, although Elizabeth Woodville sprang on her father's side from a simple squire, she was allied through her mother to the royal house of Luxembourg.

The remainder of the story of the queen of Edward IV. is matter of history, and need not be gone into here: how her two royal sons, Edward the Fifth and the Duke of York, were murdered at the instigation of the Duke of Gloucester in the Tower, and how, through the marriage of her daughter, Elizabeth, with Henry VII., the long and disastrous wars consequent on the rival claims to the throne of the Houses of York and Lancaster were finally brought to an end. The closing scenes of her life were as wretched as her life had been eventful. She was suspected by King Henry VII.—though it is difficult to imagine on what grounds—of complicity in the Lambert Simnel conspiracy, and was accordingly committed to close confinement in Bermondsey Priory, where, according to several authorities, she lingered out the remainder of her days in wretchedness and solitude. "That external splendour and internal happiness are far from being synonymous terms, is strikingly exemplified in the life of this ill-fated queen," says Miss Strickland. "What were the pomps and pleasures of royalty in comparison with the heart-rending catalogue of misery which resulted from her unexpected and desolating elevation—her father, Earl Rivers, two of her bro-

thers, and three of her sons, Lord Leonard Gray, King Edward V., and the Duke of York, successively murdered—and herself twice compelled, with her fatherless and unprotected children, to take refuge in the sanctuary—at-tainted and stripped of her possessions by a brother-in-law—and prosecuted and imprisoned by a son-in-law.”





Grafton.

II.

“ When, thunderstruck, that eagle Wolsey fell ;
When Royal favour as an ebbing sea,
Like a leviathan his grandeur left—
His grasping grandeur—naked on the sand.”



GRAFTON, which had some years previously been erected by Henry VIII. into an honour or barony, whence it took the title of Grafton *Regis*, was again the scene of royal hunting and love-making in 1529. Henry, after having been married some eighteen years to Katharine of Arragon, his brother's widow, had begun, about two years prior to the above date, to have scruples as to the validity of their union, or at least he pretended to have such ; though they were probably largely increased, if not altogether excited, by a motive much more powerful than the rebukings of conscience, his passion, namely, for the unfortunate Anne Boleyn, then one of the queen's maids-of-honour ; and having never learned the art of restraining any passion he desired to gratify, he at once set about procuring a divorce. Applying accordingly to Pope Clement for a dissolution of the bull of the previous pontiff which had given him permission to espouse Katharine, the former, unwilling to grant, and afraid to refuse, Harry's request, temporised all he could. But, it being necessary to make a show of doing something, after some delay he issued a commission to

Cardinal Campeggio, his nuncio, and to Wolsey, to try and determine the cause. The king and queen were cited before these two, and, after hearing both sides of the case, Campeggio adjourned the court for several months. In the meanwhile, however, the pope revoked the authority in the matter given to the legates, and recalled Campeggio to Rome. The nuncio accordingly prepared to leave the kingdom, and the king being then at Grafton, he repaired thither to take leave of him. He was accompanied by Wolsey, whose "grasping grandeur" eventually made shipwreck on this passion of Henry's for the maid-of-honour of his queen. On the one hand he wished to please his master the king, from whom he had received a thousand marks of favour; and, on the other, he feared to disoblige the pope, whose servant he more immediately was, and who, besides, had power to punish his disobedience. Wolsey's studied neutrality and temporising was naturally highly displeasing to the king, but much more so to the ambitious Mistress Anne and her relatives, who did all they could to stir up the king's resentment against him.

Such was the position in which matters stood when Wolsey arrived with his brother cardinal at Grafton, where he found the shameless king in eager flirtation with Anne. It was the hunting season, and the amorous monarch never rode out but the erewhile maid-of-honour accompanied him, be it to hunt the stag in the neighbouring Whittlebury, to hawk, or to kill time in some other equally royal and entertaining manner. Indeed, so far as her influence with the king and the court went, Anne Boleyn appears already to have taken the place of the discarded Katharine, who, as we know, was removed by the king's command to another place. She even presumed so far as to bless rings for the cure of the cramp, a purely queenly office, just as touching for the "king's evil" was one generally held as

appertaining to the reigning sovereign only. The latter prerogative Henry exercised at Grafton on this occasion towards two poor women, who were cured of their sickness, as we learn from his private accounts.

When Wolsey came to Grafton wagers were laid that the king would not see the lord cardinal. The betters, however, were out for once, for when Henry came into the presence chamber, he took Wolsey by the hand, and raised him up, and afterwards led him to the great window in the hall, where he held him in earnest conversation for some time; whereat those who had wagered on the king's displeasure looked wofully blank. Then the king dismissed him, telling him he would speak with him again, and went and dined with Mistress Anne Boleyn in her chamber. That lady was no less displeased than the courtiers at the favour shown by the king to Wolsey, as she straightway showed! "Sir," quoth she, "is it not a marvellous thing to consider what debt and danger the cardinal hath brought you in with all your subjects?" "How so, sweet-heart?" quoth the king. "Forsooth," quoth she, "there is not a man in all your realm worth five pounds but he hath indebted you unto him." She had reference to a loan which the king had recently raised. "Well, well," quoth the king, "as for that, there is in him no blame, for I know that matter better than you or any other." "Nay, sir," quoth she, "besides all that, what things hath he not wrought within this realm to your great slander and dishonour? There is never a nobleman within this realm that, if he had done half so much as he hath done, but he were well worth to lose his head." "Why, then, I perceive," quoth the king, "ye are not the cardinal's friend." "Forsooth, sir," then quoth she, "I have no cause, nor any other that loveth your grace; no more have your grace, if ye consider well his doings."

Mistress Anne was far from pleased with Wolsey's lukewarmness in her cause, and did not much dissemble it to the king. When Henry came again into the presence chamber, he called the cardinal aside once more, and talked with him very secretly, and then took him into his private chamber, and sat all alone with him in deep consultation until nightfall, "the which blanked his enemies very sore, and made them to stir the coals," says Cavendish, the cardinal's faithful attendant and biographer. This was, probably, the last friendly confab the great cardinal had with his royal master. Apartments not having been provided for him at Grafton, he must needs go to lodge at "Master Empson's," at Easton Neston; and, when he and his brother cardinal presented themselves in the morning, the king was about to ride to view the ground for the new park at Hartwell, and had, therefore, no time for further conference with Wolsey. The wily Anne Boleyn had, no doubt, arranged this little affair in order to keep her royal suitor riding about until the cardinals should be gone. Due provision had been made for the royal stomach, and when they returned to Grafton the pair of ecclesiastics had departed, which shows that after all one woman's wit was more than a match for those of two papal legates. Soon after Wolsey fell, "never to rise again," and in his ruin he exclaimed—

" All my glories
In that one woman I have lost for ever."

The pope still delayed and put off, until Henry got tired of waiting, and did without the papal sanction to his divorce and remarriage, and so Anne gained the point her ambition soared after. Henry visited Grafton again in the fall of 1532, when Katharine's fair maid-of-honour had become queen, or was just about to be.



Burghley.

“ They roam’d a long and a weary way,
Nor much was the maiden’s heart at ease,
When now, at the close of one stormy day,
They see a proud castle among the trees.
‘ To-night,’ said the youth, ‘ we’ll shelter there ;
The wind blows cold, and the hour is late :’
So he blew the horn with a chieftain’s air,
And the porter bow’d as they pass’d the gate.
‘ Now, welcome, lady,’ exclaimed the youth ;
‘ This castle is thine, and these dark woods all !’
She believed him crazed, but his words were truth,
For Ellen is Lady of Rosna Hall !”



HE tutelary spirit of Burghley, could we communicate with it, might tell us many a quaint legend of the magnificent old house, built by Thorp for Sir William Cecil, Lord High Treasurer to Queen Elizabeth, many an interesting piece of history, many an amusing anecdote, and, perchance, many a curious State secret of the days when Anne Boleyn’s haughty daughter swayed the destinies of England. But the said tutelary genius has as little to say of the object of its care as the lares and penates of patrician Roman houses could recount of them. We must needs, therefore, content ourselves with what tradition has given us, without such aid, and tell how the story goes that the virgin queen’s bedroom, with its hangings of green velvet and gold, is

said to remain in the same state as when her royal majesty slept there,—from which we may conclude that the Parliamentary troops who stormed and captured Burghley, and took “pillage of the whole house,” left something behind; how the quaint Gerarde, author of the *Herbal*, was my Lord Treasurer’s chief gardener; and how Master Verrio painted such a large extent of the walls and ceilings with “sprawling gods,” and was so fond of a good dinner that he punished the cook for one day sending him up a poor one, by painting his portrait in the courts of Pluto; just as Dante, in a more serious spirit, put his enemies into the realms of endless woe, over the entrance to which he wrote—

“All hope abandon, ye who enter here.”

Among the numerous pictures which adorn the walls, interesting for their subjects or their artistic merit, is one by Lawrence, of the “Cottager’s Daughter,” whose story has been described as “among the finest pages of romance in the British peerage.” The story has been told by various hands, but will, for all that, bear telling once more.

When the tenth Earl and the first Marquis of Exeter was a young man, and indeed a minor, he espoused a lady of rank, but after a few years of anything save matrimonial felicity, he was divorced from her in 1791. After the separation had taken place, the earl, his uncle, advised him to retire to a part of the country where he was not known, and live quietly as a private gentleman. This Mr. Cecil accordingly did, withdrawing to and taking up his abode at the village of Great Bolas, in a remote part of Shropshire. He at first fixed his residence at the village inn, where he amused himself for some months, occupying his time chiefly as a landscape painter, for which he commonly passed. He

went under the assumed name of Jones, and no one had the remotest inkling that he was other than he appeared to be. As, however, he had plenty of money, and was extremely liberal to all about him, some persons in the neighbourhood, imagining that he had not come honestly by his wealth, grew suspicious of him, and shunned his company. Others took him for an Indian nabob, and conceiving it to be an offence for such a personage to invade their bucolic retreat, they made it their duty to be disagreeable to him, and to look askance as he passed them. Becoming tired of this sort of thing, and of his too public position at the village inn, Mr. Jones sought out a farmhouse, where he might board and lodge in a more private and retired manner. Several families to whom he applied, however, refused to take him in, because he was "too fine a gentleman, and they could not understand how he came by his money." At length he found a humble family that was willing to let him a room and give him the little attention he wanted. The name of his host was Hoggins, and under his peaceful roof he continued to reside for some time, only going to town now and again, when it was necessary to replenish his purse. But, finding his time hang somewhat heavily on his hands, he purchased a bit of land, and occupied himself by superintending the building of a house upon it. Such, however, was the suspicion with which he was regarded by his rustic neighbours, that he could not get any of the village tradesmen to do work for him without paying them liberally beforehand.

Now the farmer at whose cottage his lordship lodged had a daughter of about seventeen years of age, "whose rustic beauties," says one who narrates the story, "threw, at an infinite distance, all that his lordship had ever beheld in the circle of fashion; the softest roses, that ever modesty poured upon youth and loveliness, glowed upon her lips;

her cheeks were tinged with the divine bloom of Hebe; and the purity of the huntress nymph was in her breast:—

‘ Her lips were red—and one was thin—
Compar’d to that was next the chin—
(Some bee had stung it newly);’

and whenever any part of her neck or bosom was accidentally displayed, the ‘*Nitor splendens marmore purior*’ dazzled the observer’s eye.” Perceiving that this charming maiden, though humbly born and bred, would, with her beauty adorn and with her virtue shed a lustre on the most elevated station, his lordship was pleased to think that he had inspired her with a regard that he felt he might with honesty reciprocate. The Poet Laureate has told the beautiful story in his own beautiful way, and pen could not better describe the nobleman’s wooing of the “cottager’s daughter” than in his words:—

“ In her ears he whispers gaily,
‘ If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watched thee daily,
And I think thou lov’st me well.’
She replies in accents fainter,
‘ There is none I love like thee.’”

He still, however, keeps up the fiction of his humble position:—

“ I can make no marriage present,
Little can I give my wife :
Love will make our cottage pleasant,
And I love thee more than life.”

It is related that when Mr. Cecil told the parents of his beloved that he liked their daughter Sarah, and would make her his wife if they would give their consent, the good dame was astounded at the bare suggestion, and exclaimed, “What, marry our daughter to a fine gentleman?”

No, indeed!" "And why not?" asked the more practical father. "Why not, if she likes him? Has he not got a house, and land too, and plenty of money to keep her?" In fine, the matter was arranged, and in due course he

" Leads her to the village altar,
And they leave her father's roof."

In order to prepare his fair rustic bride for the different sphere in life she was shortly to enter upon, her husband procured her masters of every kind, and in twelve months she became an accomplished woman, to the envy of the country damsels around, and to the astonishment of the villagers, who now began to be reconciled to the supposed "too fine a gentleman." Not long afterwards the Earl of Exeter died, and, on the news reaching him, Mr. Cecil set out for the family seat, taking his wife with him, as if going on a tour of pleasure. On the journey he called at the seats of several noblemen, where, to the utter astonishment of his wife, he was received in the most friendly manner. The journey is nobly described by Mr. Tennyson:—

" They by parks and lodges going,
See the lordly castles stand ;
Summer woods, about them blowing,
Make a murmur in the land.

From deep thought himself he rouses,
Says to her that loves him well—
' Let us see these handsome houses,
Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'

So she goes by him attended,
Hears him lovingly converse,
Sees whatever fair and splendid
Lay betwixt his house and hers :

Parks, with oak and chestnut shady ;
Parks and order'd gardens great ;
Ancient homes of lord and lady,
Built for pleasure and for state.

All he shows her makes him dearer ;
 Evermore she seems to gaze
 On that cottage growing nearer,
 Where they twain will end their days.
 Oh, but she will love him truly ;
 He shall have a cheerful home ;
 She will order all things duly,
 When beneath his roof they come.
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
 Till a gateway she discerns,
 With armorial bearings stately,
 And beneath the gate she turns ;
 Sees a mansion more majestic
 Than all those she saw before ;
 Many a gallant gay domestic
 Bows before him at the door."

Not till now did the earl discover to his humble "cottage's daughter" his real rank and position :—

" And while now she wonders blindly,
 Nor the meaning can divine,
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,
 ' All of this is mine and thine.' "

The effect of such a disclosure on a delicate and susceptible organization may easily be imagined :—

" All at once the colour flushes
 Her sweet face from brow to chin,
 As it were with shame she blushes,
 And her spirit changed within.
 Then her countenance all over
 Pale again as death did prove ;
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,
 And he cheered her soul with love."

As soon as he had settled his affairs, the earl returned into Shropshire, and discovering his rank to his wife's father and mother, put them into the house he had built there, and, besides, settled on them an income of seven hundred pounds

a year. He afterwards took the countess with him to London, and introduced her to the fashionable world, where she was greatly admired and respected both on account of her beauty and her quiet unassuming manners. But, if we may believe the Poet Laureate, the shock to her nature, consequent on her sudden and unexpected elevation from a humble to a high station, was one from which she did not recover :—

“ But a trouble weigh’d upon her,
 And perplex’d her night and morn,
 With the burthen of an honour
 Unto which she was not born.
 Faint she grew and ever fainter,
 As she murmured, ‘ Oh, that he
 Were once more that landscape painter
 Which did win my heart from me !’
 So she droop’d and droop’d before him
 Fading slowly from his side ;
 Three fair children first she bore him,
 Then before her time she died.
 Deeply mourn’d the Lord of Burghley
 Burghley-house by Stamford town.

* * * * *

And he came to look upon her,
 And he looked at her and said :
 Bring the dress and put upon her
 That she wore when she was wed.’
 Then her people, softly treading,
 Bore to earth her body drest
 In the dress that she was wed in,
 That her spirit might have rest.”

She died in 1797, lamented by all who knew her, and the marquis survived her but a few years, passing away in 1804. Hazlitt says this story outdoes the Arabian Nights, and that he never wished to be a lord but when he thought of it.



Fotheringay.

I.

' Before me winding pathways lead
To upland lawn, and level mead ;
Where Nen in silent sorrow laves
The princely warriors' lowly graves ;
And that dismantled mount, where stood
The towers imbued with Stuart's blood.

* * * * *

Lo ! on that mound, in days of feudal pride,
Thy towering castle frown'd above the tide ;
Flung wide her gates, where troops of vassals met
With awe the brow of high Plantagenet,
But, ah ! what chiefs in sable crest appear ?
What bright achievement marks you hero's bier ?
'Tis York's—from Agincourt's victorious plain,
They bear the fallen hero o'er the main."



F all Northampton's memorials of royalty, none is so sad as that which is contained in the name of Fotheringay—itself a royal epitaph in its most mournful sense, telling, as it does indeed, "sad stories of the death of kings." To mention the word Fotheringay is to conjure up in the imagination the sad form of one who has, perhaps, become the most identified therewith of any in the popular mind ; of whom it has been written, "If another Homer were to arise, and if the poet were to seek another Helen for the subject of a modern epic of war, religion, and love, he would, beyond

all doubt, find her in Mary Stuart, the most beautiful, the weakest, the most attractive, and most attracted of women;" for no matter what view we may take of the character of Mary Queen of Scots, and her relation to the time in which she lived, we can have but one feeling in regard to the tragic end of so sorrowful a life: we can only commiserate the unfortunate woman and queen.

But Fotheringay saw other sad royal heads pillowed within its walls ere the unfortunate Mary sped her last sighs from its darksome towers.

A word or two first, however, anent its history. The castle of Fotheringay was built by Simon de St. Liz, second Earl of Northampton. The estate of Fotheringay was granted to Judith, daughter of Lambert de Sens, maternal sister of William the Conqueror. This Judith was wife of Waltheof, son of Earl Siward, who was possessed of all the power which wealth and military prowess could bestow; but these did not preserve him against adversity. He was accused of conspiracy against the king, and was arrested and beheaded at Winchester. He left one daughter, Maud, who was married to St. Liz, after whose death she became the wife of David, King of Scotland, to whose son Henry, Earl of Huntingdon, and grandson of Malcolm and William, Kings of Scotland, the castle and lordship successively descended. Thus this fair appanage became a possession of the sovereigns of Scotland, and though reft from them by the victorious Plantagenets, they never ceased to claim it. In the reign of Edward II. the Earl of Richmond—to whom and his heirs the castle had been granted—dying without issue, it was bestowed by the Crown upon his grand-daughter, Mary de Valentia, daughter of Guy de Chatillon, Comte de St. Paul, in France, the betrothed wife of Audemar de Valentia, Earl of Pembroke, who fell in a tournament on

the day of their nuptials; whence she is characterized by Gray as

“Sad Chatillon, on her bridal morn
That wept her bleeding love.”

The lordship of Fotheringay was subsequently granted by Edward III. to his son, Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, and from this time it became a chief and favourite seat of the House of York. The castle having fallen much into decay, the greater part of it was entirely rebuilt by Edmund. He erected the tower or keep in the shape of a fetterlock, which with a falcon inclosed, became the favourite device of the family. Whilst they were contending for the crown, the falcon was represented as endeavouring to expand its wings, and force open the lock; when the family had actually ascended the throne, the falcon was represented as *free*, and the lock open.

A story is told about this device which should not be omitted. It is said that Edmund, when he once observed his sons gazing upon one of the windows, asked them—they being young scholars—what was the Latin for a fetterlock. The youths looked one at the other, but gave no answer. Whereupon the baron said, “If you cannot tell me, I will tell you—‘*Hic hæc hoc tasceatis*,’ and therewithal add, ‘God knoweth what may happen hereafter.’” Hence it was that Edward IV., Langley’s great grandchild, in allusion to the above presage, commanded his younger son, the Duke of York, to use for his badge the emblem of the fetterlock open, in verification of his ancestor’s prophetic remark.

On the death of Edmund Langley, Fotheringay descended with the family honours to his son Edmund, Earl of Rutland, who fell at the battle of Agincourt. He dying without issue, the castle and lordship descended to his

nephew, Richard, Duke of York, through whom it became most intimately connected with that terrible struggle which closed the Middle Ages for England—the Wars of the Roses. Richard Plantagenet, who was for a time Protector of the realm, claimed the crown in succession to Henry VI., and it was here, probably, that most of his numerous children were born. In the church of Fotheringay it was, when the fiery conflict of faction had closed for him in the defeat at Wakefield, and the ignominious crowning of his decapitated head with paper on the walls of York, that his remains found a resting place, along with those of his equally unfortunate son, Lord Rutland, stabbed to death by Lord Clifford after the same disastrous fight. This was in 1459. Thirty-five years later Cicely, Duchess of York, came to share their rest. Well might it be said of her—

“After life’s fitful fever, she sleeps well.”

A more notable female figure than that of Cicely, aunt of the great Warwick, is rarely met with in the annals of England. She bore thirteen children to her lord, of whom eight were sons and five daughters. Of the former she lived to see three crowned and four murdered. Richard, Duke of York, her husband, when called upon, as heir presumptive, to exercise sovereign authority, assumed the regal style. In the *Paston Letters* there is preserved an original letter from the Duke of York, with the title appended at top, in kingly form, bearing the arms of England and France quarterly. Cicely, too, gave audience in her throne-room at Fotheringay, with all the pomp and majesty of a queen, which high station, we are told, she had by this time come to consider her due, and of the title appertaining to which she was, indeed, only deprived by the untimely death of her princely consort at Wakefield.

At least one of her sons, who attained to the crown,

was born here. Within the walls of Fotheringay are said to have occurred those terrible omens of the future wickedness of Richard III.

“ When from thy lap the ruthless Richard sprang,
A boding sound through all thy borders rang ;
It spoke a tale of blood, fair Nevil’s woe,
York’s murdering hand, and Edward’s future foe.”

One need hardly recount all the long catalogue of direful presages: How he was born—before his time—a monstrosity in nature, with all his teeth, with hair on his head, and nails on his fingers and toes; how he was low in stature, crook-backed, hook-shouldered, splay-footed, and goggle-eyed, his face little and round, his complexion swarthy, his left arm, from his birth, dry and withered; and how his mind was uniform with his body, “both of them equally deformed.” So we read in *Baker’s Chronicle*. We owe the general acceptance of this sinister view of Richard’s character very largely to Shakespeare, from whom so many take all they know of England’s early history. He framed his tragedy on the popular chronicles and histories of the time, all written, like Shakespeare’s own *Richard III.*, to suit the Tudor ear. Readers of the poet will not need to be reminded how Richard is made to sanction the stories of his mental and physical deformity.

“ The women cried,
‘ O Jesus, bless us ! he is born with teeth,’
And so I was, which plainly signified
That I should snarl and bite, and play the dog.”

And again :—

“ Then since the heavens have shaped my body so,
Let hell make crook’d my mind to answer it.”

In how far history has traduced the last Yorkist sove-

reign, and how far he merited his evil name, we shall probably never know; yet something has been done to whitewash his blackness. There can be no doubt that Richard owes much of his ill fame to that common spirit which hails the successful man, and not a little to the natural desire of his supplanter, Henry VII., to blacken his cause, and make his own fair in comparison. Not the slightest foundation exists for the gossiping tales in respect to Richard's birth; nor can any trace be found in contemporary records, with the single exception of that of John Rous, the monk of Warwick, whose narrative has been pronounced by Lord Orford as "too despicable and lying" for quotation. "The idle tales," says Hutton, "are beneath the notice of history;" and he goes on to say that Richard's infancy was spent at Fotheringay, "where he cuckt his ball and shot his taw with the same delight as other lads." Honest John Stowe, who was born only forty years after Richard's decease, must, it has been observed, have had facilities for speaking with those who had known and seen the king, yet, in his *Survey of London*, he declares that "he could find no such deformity in King Richard III. as historians commonly relate." The celebrated Countess of Desmond, who survived to an extraordinary age, more than a hundred years, stated that she danced with him at the coronation of his brother, Edward IV., and that, with the exception of the king, he was the handsomest man at court, Edward being celebrated for his personal accomplishments.

It is no part of my task here, however, to prove the ugly duckling a swan. Richard has not lacked able advocates, and they have shown pretty conclusively that, bad as he was, the last Yorkist king was, like another personage of whom we hear occasionally, "not so black as he is painted." The foulest blot in his character is the alleged murder of

the young princes in the Tower—a crime which has obtained the most general credence from the fact that there was a substantial reason why Richard should desire them out of the way, they standing between him and the throne; and yet it is a remarkable fact, as Walpole has asserted, in his *Historic Doubts*, that there is no proof at all of so dire an atrocity having been committed.

It is worthy of note here that the familiar legend of “The Babes in the Wood” has been considered to be, and apparently with reason, an obscure and disguised relation of the suspected murder of his nephews by the Duke of Gloucester; and whoever peruses this tale under that impression, and compares the “doleful story” of the two babes in the ballad with Sir Thomas More’s historical narrative of the “dolourous end of those babes,” cannot help being struck with the general resemblance it bears to leading facts connected with the tradition of the death of the young princes. There are even points of strong similarity between the story as told by Shakespeare, and in the popular rhyme. The fate of the uncle in the latter is literally true to the common fame respecting Richard’s end:—

“ And now the heavy wrath of God
Upon the uncle fell;
Yea, fearful fiends did haunt his house,
His conscience felt a hell.”

But to turn to a more agreeable subject—there is a pleasing story told of Richard’s relation to Anne Neville, which is strikingly in contrast with what we read in Shakespeare of the wooing of that dame, when he succeeds in winning her at the very time she is attending the funeral of the Prince of Wales, whom he himself had killed, and then breaks forth into that demoniacal sarcasm:—

“ Was ever woman in this humour woo’d ?
Was ever woman in this humour won ? ”

The account is given by the Chronicler of Crowland, a contemporary, and is therefore the more remarkable. It is there stated that Lady Anne was only the betrothed of Edward, Prince of Wales, son of Henry VI., and not his widow, as she is called by all our historians, and represented in Shakespeare’s masterly scene. Richard desired her for his wife. His brother Clarence, however, who had espoused the elder daughter of Warwick, was unwilling to share their rich inheritance with his brother, and so concealed the young lady. Hutton, in telling the story, says in his quaint way : “ We shall now, in 1473, behold him in another light, a light in which he is seldom placed by historians, in love. The softest and the most amiable passion of the human heart is never ascribed to Richard, and it was thought by his enemies, if they thought at all, that the tender feelings of a lover could never enter the breast of the monster.” By the murder of Edward, Prince of Wales, at Tewkesbury, Anne—whom Buck calls “ the better woman,” though without saying why—became free, and Richard, struck with her beauty, paid his addresses. Clarence, like many of the Plantagenets, having no sense of justice, had seized the whole fortune, which he refused to refund, and used every effort in his power to prevent the match. This caused a violent quarrel between the two brothers. Clarence, fearing Richard would be too powerful, conveyed the young lady away, and hid her so cunningly that she could not be found. “ The gallant Richard, with the eyes of Argus, the diligence of Jason, and the assistance of love,”—I quote from Hutton—“ like a faithful knight, and true to his injured mistress, neither gave himself or his friends rest in the pursuit. After many

adventures he discovered her secreted in an obscure place in London, disguised like a servant girl; nay, in the strange dress of a cook-maid. Like the ancient knight of romance, he delivered the fair lady from captivity, and carried her away in triumph. For security he conveyed her to the Sanctuary in St. Martin's-le-Grand, and soon after led her to the temple of Hymen." The end of the matter was that the king—their brother Edward IV.—composed the differences between Gloucester and Clarence for the present, and divided the estate between them.

Edward IV. resided for some time at Fotheringay, where he had an interview with King Alexander of Scotland.





Fotheringay.

II.

“ Alone here oft may Scotia’s beauteous Queen
Through tears have gazed upon a lovely scene,
Victim of villainy, of woman’s hate,
Of fiery zeal, of wiles, and storms of State ;
Torn from her throne, her country, and her child,
And cast an exiled monarch on this wild,
She here was taught what youthful beauty ne’er,
While seated on a throne, had deigned to hear,
To say submissive, at the closing scene,
‘ ’Tis well that I have thus afflicted been ;’
Then, calmly on the block, in faith resign
Three heart-corrupting crowns, for one divine.”



FROM a royal palace, Fotheringay became a royal prison. Henry VIII. gave the castle and lordship as a dower to the unfortunate Katherine of Arragon, his queen, and she is said to have been at much expense in repairing and adorning it. She never appeared to have any great liking for it, however ; and when her over-conscientious royal spouse destined it for her prison, she was overcome with such a horror of the place that she declared “to Fotheringay she would not go unless bound with cart ropes and carried thither.” She resided there some time, nevertheless, and was only removed to Kimbolton to die. In Mary’s reign the Earl of

Devonshire was a State prisoner there for a short time. Queen Elizabeth committed the castle to the keeping of Sir William Fitzwilliam, who was castellan when Mary Queen of Scots found her last lodging within its walls, and closed the long list of princely sufferers it had housed.

Of Mary Stuart's unhappy and eventful life it is unnecessary to say anything here; the story is too well known. Falling into the clutches of her royal cousin, and transferred from castle to castle by the policy of Elizabeth and her ministers, with a view to foiling the plans of conspirators for her release, Mary was at length, in the autumn of 1586, brought to Fotheringay, the strongest and gloomiest of her prisons. The date generally assigned for her removal hither is the 25th of September; but there is a Latin inscription in the window of the manor house of Abbot's Bromley, called Hill Hall, recording the fact that Mary Queen of Scots passed through that village on the 21st of September, 1586, on her way from Chartley, having passed through Burton. She probably rested and took refreshment at that secluded mansion. There is a tradition to the effect that the luckless queen, on first beholding the gloomy towers of Fotheringay, from the lane or avenue of approach, had a premonition of the fate that was to overtake her within its walls, causing her to ejaculate, "Perio" (I perish), from which exclamation the lane, and the mill near by, took their name. Another version of the story, however, says that Mary heard the messenger's horn sounding from the spot where stands Perry Mill just before her execution. She expected a reprieve, and in her disappointment she uttered the word "Perio." Probably there is as much ground for the tradition (in either form) as for the couplet which says—

"If Fotheringay Castle had not been so high
Peterborough spires had not been so high."

In her conduct towards Mary Stuart Queen Elizabeth appears to have been almost at her wit's end. Her usual course showed great statesmanlike abilities, but in the dread of her rival she seems to have lost control of all those distinguishing characteristics. Nor need we, perhaps, wonder much, when it is considered that she had to do with one who had turned the heads of all who had known her. "In the closet," says one of our latest historians, "she was as cool and astute a politician as Elizabeth herself; with plans as subtle, but of a far wider and grander range than the queen's." Add to this that she had qualities, in respect to which Elizabeth could not even distantly approach her. She was one to win men's devotion in a way that her queenly rival could not. Her beauty, her exquisite grace of manner, her generosity of temper and warmth of affection, her frankness of speech, her sensibility, her gaiety, her womanly tears, her manlike courage, the play and freedom of her nature, the flashes of poetry that broke from her at every intense moment of her life, flung a spell over friend and foe, which has only deepened with the lapse of years. Such, indeed, was the irresistible fascination she exercised that she was commonly believed, by her enemies, to be possessed of some power of witchcraft, and, like Richard III., to be a little more than human.

After many months spent in her gloomy prison, with nothing to look upon but the flat expanse of country round about, with the undulating Nene slowly finding its way through it; weary of her long captivity, of her failure to rouse Philip of Spain, or Scotland, to her aid; of the baffled revolt of the English Catholics, and the fruitless intrigues of the Jesuits, Mary bent for a moment to submission. "Let me go," she wrote to the queen; "let me retire from this island to some solitude where I may pre-

pare my soul to die. Grant this, and I will sign away every right which either I or mine can claim." But the appeal—heart-rending almost in its despair—was useless, and for a time her hopes appear to have rested on new plots. But these, too, were abortive; and her seeming complicity in them brought about her trial and condemnation by the Commission of Peers which sate as her judges at Fotheringay. How the death-warrant was obtained from Elizabeth, and how afterwards she would fain have washed her hands of the disgrace, we have all read. Also, how, on the morning of February 8th, 1587, Thomas Andrews, Sheriff of Northants, informed his royal prisoner that it was time she came forth; and how "forth she came," as those attest who beheld her on that sad morning, "still stately and queenly, though much worn and grey with age." There is a picture at Boughton, said to have been taken the day before her funeral, which represents her as corpulent and round-shouldered, though still with traces of that wondrous beauty and grace which had charmed all hearts, and, in her younger days, drew from Ronsard those tender lines:—

"I saw the Scottish Queen, so fair and wise,
She seemed some power descended from the skies.
Near to her eyes I drew, two radiant spheres,
Two suns of beauty shining without peers.
I saw them dimm'd with dewy moisture clear,
And trembling on their lids a crystal tear,
Remembering France, her sceptre, and the day
When her first love pass'd like a dream away."

Mary died as dauntlessly as she had lived. "Do not weep," she said to her ladies, "I have given my word for you." "Tell my friends," she besought Melville, "that I die a good Catholic." Her last prayer, com-

posed by herself, has been universally admired for its beauty :

“ O Domine Deus ! speravi te ;
O care me, Jesu, nunc libera me,” &c.

She showed no signs of trepidation as she laid her head on the block in the castle-hall ; and when all that was mortal of the ill-fated queen was being removed, her little dog, which had got into the hall unperceived, was found hid in her robes—resembling, in its blind fidelity to the last, so many of those who had attached themselves to her fortunes.

It is probable that Mary Queen of Scots, in spite of dark forebodings and premonitions, had still hoped and imagined that Elizabeth would not carry matters to extremities. In one of her letters to the queen she notes that she has returned a jewel, supposed to have been a diamond ring, which Elizabeth had sent her as a token of amity when she first came to England. It was the English custom to give diamonds to be returned at a time of need or distress to recall friendship. Mary probably counted on the return of the token as likely to produce a good effect in her favour.

There were some indignities offered to the condemned queen which, one would have thought, even hate could have dispensed with. But then the gentle Sir William Fitzwilliam, of Milton, had by this time been superseded as castellan by Sir Amias Paulet. One incident traditionally connected with the execution is worthy of mention, as marking how an act, intended to embitter the queen's last moments, was turned into a delicate courtesy. A band of musicians, the legend says, was hired to play in the castle yard to distract the attention of the country folk there assembled, while the sad tragedy was being enacted within, just as it was the custom to do at the burning of witches.

It was usual on those occasions to play a popular jig tune of those days known as "Jumping Joan," which had the effect of brutalising the mob. This was the air now played, but slowly, in the solemn style of church music, so that from a dance tune it was transformed into a funeral march or a dirge. Strange to say, the score of a requiem, said to have been performed at Mary Stuart's death, was some years ago discovered at Oxford, and an analysis of it revealed the fact that when changed from slow to quick time it became the veritable "Jumping Joan" of the village greens.

No stone of the ancient fortress of Fotheringay now stands one upon another ; hardly a trace of it remains, save only, perhaps, the outer moat, which was formed by the Nene and the mill stream. It has been said that James I. razed it to the ground, and obliterated every vestige of it, in revenge for the sorrows his mother had suffered there. This tradition has been handed down by a local poet of the last century, in a poem entitled "Antona's Banks" (quoted in Archdeacon Bonney's *History of Fotheringay*). The lines referring to this subject are as follow :—

" In darkest night for ever veil the scene
When thy cold walls received the captive queen :
For this hath time erased thee from its page,
And filial justice with vindictive rage
Burst on thy princely towers with whelming tide,
Nor left one vestige to relate thy pride."

In this instance, however (as well as in the superstition which attributes the numerous fires that have taken place in the village to the curse bestowed on the place by the king), tradition is at fault. The castle remained standing and furnished till the last years of James's reign, but was gradually destroyed and used up in other buildings ; the

great hall having been removed and re-erected at Connington, and other parts used to build the chapel at Fineshade. I have heard, or read somewhere, that the great window from the banquetting hall in which Mary suffered now adorns the staircase of the ancient Talbot Inn, at Oundle.

When the quaint old Fuller visited Fotheringay Castle he observed the following couplet from an old ballad, written with the point of a diamond on one of the windows in Mary Stuart's well-known characters :—

“ From the top of all my trust,
Mishap hath laid me in the dust.”

Buried first in Peterborough Cathedral, Mary's remains were afterwards transferred to Westminster Abbey, where, says Dean Stanley in his history of the place, they were, up to a recent date, reputed to perform cures. A relic of the queen, similarly potent, is still exhibited in a church at Antwerp. Such is some of the romantic and supernatural glamour which admiring generations have cast about Mary Queen of Scots. Well might Lamartine say that, had another epic of love and war to be written similar to that of the *Iliad*, no fitter figure could be chosen for the second Helen than Mary Stuart, whose fate has for ever made Fotheringay a landmark in history.





Green's Norton.

“ Oh, lucky looks that fawned on Katherine Parr !
A woman rare like her but seldom seen ;
To Borough first, and then to Latimer
She widow was, and then became a queen.”

(Throckmorton MS.)



F associations with queens of Henry VIII. Northamptonshire has no lack, three of them at least having been connected with the county at one time of their lives or another. The

unhappy Katherine of Arragon found at Fotheringay first a dower castle and then a prison, a tomb at Peterborough ; Anne Boleyn, her still more unfortunate supplanter, enjoyed some of her earliest triumphs at Grafton ; and finally Catherine Parr, the last and luckiest of Bluff Harry's consorts, was, if we may trust tradition, born at Green's Norton, and there spent some of her earliest years.

In those days, although no levelling theories had as yet attacked the “ divinity that doth hedge about a king,” it was not held imperative for English monarchs to seek partners among the scions of foreign royal and imperial houses. It was the more usual custom to do so because State policy often suggested such alliances with a view to cementing treaties of peace, or bringing about other and more ambitious results. But the rule was frequently broken through. We saw, in the case of Edward IV., that the king deliberately set at naught the views of his counsellors,

by contracting a secret alliance with Elizabeth Grey while they were negotiating a political union with a French princess. Of the six wives of Henry VIII. four were his subjects. In the case of the last, however, it is claimed that, though a subject, she was nevertheless of royal origin, deriving her descent from Ivo Tailbois, brother of Fulk Earl of Anjou, who "came in with the Conqueror," and to whom William of Normandy gave that part of Lancashire which adjoins Westmoreland, and so much of the latter county as is now called the barony of Kendal. From the marriage of Tailbois with Lucy, sister of the renowned **Earls** Morcar and Edwin, Sir Thomas Parr inherited the blood of the Anglo-Saxon kings. The male line failing with William de Lancastre, seventh in descent from the first baron, the honours and estates of that family passed to his sisters, Helwise and Alice. Margaret, the elder, co-heiress of Helwise, by Peter le Brus, espoused the younger son by Robert Lord Roos by Isabel, daughter of Alexander II. King of Scotland. Their grandson, Sir Thomas de Roos, wedded Catherine, daughter of Sir Thomas Strickland, of Sizergh Castle, Westmoreland. Elizabeth, the only daughter of this union, was married to Sir William Parr, knight. Sir William Parr, grandson of this pair, who was made Knight of the Garter, espoused Elizabeth, one of the co-heiresses of Lord Fitzhugh by Alice, daughter of Ralph Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, and Joanna Beaufort, daughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. Alice Neville was sister to the king's great grandmother, Cicely Neville, Duchess of York, and through this connection Catherine Parr was fourth cousin to Henry VIII.

Matilda, or as she was more commonly called, Maud Green, mother of Catherine, was the daughter and co-heiress of Sir Thomas Green, of Boughton and Green's Norton. This

lady was a descendant of the distinguished families of Talbot and Throckmorton, and one of the latter name, contemporary with Queen Catherine, perpetrated a great deal of bad verse in celebration of that be-crowned connection of the family.

Baker goes very fully into his reasons for believing Catherine was a native of Green's Norton. Fuller had previously, with perhaps the least possible touch of indifference, relinquished the honour. He says, she "may probably be presumed a native of this shire, however, to prevent cavils, we resign her over to Westmoreland." It is really a doubtful point, and so must be left, but the weight of probability seems to be on the side of Northamptonshire; the principal evidence to the contrary being that Sir Thomas Parr, her father, was castellan of Kendal, and that, therefore, his children would be most likely to be born there.

Lady Catherine was, as a child, of a very precocious disposition, and early got her head filled with notions of future greatness. Astrology was one of the "sciences" more cultivated in those days, and a professor of the art of drawing nativities appears to have fostered this bent. Strype is my authority. He says in his *Memoirs*: "I have met with a passage concerning this queen, in the margin of 'Ball's Centuries,' in the possession of a friend of mine, Dr. Simpson, which showed the greatness of her mind, and the quickness of her wit, while she was yet a young child. Somebody, skilled in prognostication, casting her nativity, said that she was born to sit in the highest seat of imperial majesty, having all the eminent stars and planets in her house. This she heard, and took such notice of, that when her mother used sometimes to call her to work, she would reply: 'My hands were ordained to touch crowns and sceptres, and not spindles and needles.'"

And yet, in spite of her youthful contempt for “spindles and needles,” Lady Catherine afterwards became almost as famous for her needlework as for her theology, which is saying a great deal; moreover, she found the occupation of needlewoman far less dangerous than that of theologian, as we shall see. Catherine had undoubtedly superior natural talents, and they were improved by careful cultivation. She read and wrote Latin with facility, possessed some knowledge of Greek, the study of which had just been revived, and was tolerably well versed in modern languages. Miss Strickland says: “The elegance and beauty of her devotional writings are a standing monument” of her mastery of “the pure well of English undefiled.”

Chaucer tells us very quaintly, in one of his Tales, that the most pious and heavenly-minded women have not unfrequently a strong tinge of the worldly element in their composition,—undoubtedly a very proper qualification for them so long as they have to live in this sublunary sphere. Of this nature was Catherine Parr. As the worthy Throckmorton tells us, in the somewhat limping rhymes above quoted, Catherine Parr had already been wedded to two husbands,

“To Borough first, and then to Latimer,”

and she was about to accept a third, when King Bluebeard stepped in, and intimated his condescending choice of her as his “Number Six.” It is said she was somewhat dismayed at the honour, as well she might be; but she speedily overcame any repugnance she may have felt, and quietly shelved her lover, Sir Thomas Seymour, whom she confessed she “had determined to marry.” Prior to her marriage with Henry—the “same old Hintz” of Luther, though the “our Moses” of Catherine, “because,” she said, “he delivered us out of the captivity and spiritual bondage

of Pharaoh"—she is said to have had a great influence over him, which she doubtless owed no less to her careful training than to her native mother wit. If report be true, the latter, in more than one instance, drew her out of danger when her theology had led her into it. On one occasion especially, when the king was ill, she ventured to express herself on the subject of religion more firmly than his impetuous temper could well brook, and, worked upon by Gardiner and Wriothesley, the chancellor, he sanctioned the drawing-up of a warrant for committing her to the Tower. A copy of the document, however, was shown to Catherine. She immediately repaired to the king, who at once entered upon the dangerous subject of theological controversy. Catherine modestly declined conversation, remarking that woman, by her original creation, was made subject to man, and ought to be instructed by him. "Not so," said the king; "you are become a doctor, Kate, able to instruct us, and not to be instructed by us." To which she replied that he had misunderstood her motive; she only wished to alleviate his pain by giving zest, through opposition, to conversation. "And is it even so?" said the king; "then we are perfect friends again." The next morning, while the king and queen were walking in the garden, Gardiner, unaware of the reconciliation, appeared at the head of forty pursuivants to arrest her. The king stepped aside to him, and sent him about his business—with a flea in his ear, as the saying is. Catherine did not know what he had come for, and interceded for him. Said the king, "You little know, Kate, how ill he deserves your good offices." So she who was "the first Protestant queen of England" was spared, and lived yet to cherish and foster the doctrines of the Reformation. In her, says one of her most generous eulogists, "we behold the protectress of Coverdale, the friend of Ann Askew, the learned and vir-

tuous matron who directed the studies of Lady Jane Grey, Edward VI., and Queen Elizabeth, and who may, with truth, be called the nursing-mother of the Reformation." Yet the end which awaited this, in many respects noble-minded queen, was a sad one. Outliving her royal spouse, she consoled herself, within a year of his death, with a fourth husband in Admiral Seymour, a man of the vilest principles, whose companionship did not bring her much peace.

The strange fate which tumbles mightiest sovereigns, was in no small degree hers, the concluding line of her life reading: "She died broken-hearted, not without suspicion of poison."

Many of her family shared in her speedy rise. She bestowed the office of Lord Chamberlain on her uncle, Lord Parr, of Horton. Her brother, William Parr, was created Earl of Essex by Henry, and Marquis of Northampton by Edward; but being implicated in the attempt to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne, he was attainted of high treason in Mary's reign, and deprived of his honours.

The manor house of the Greens, it should be said, stood near Green's Norton Church, but no vestige of it remains.





Holdenby.

“ — Let's sit upon the ground
And tell sad stories of the deaths of kings.”



F all the famous residences of Northamptonshire Holmby House is perhaps the best known because it has taken its place most imperishably in history. Situated amid woodland and pastoral scenery of the richest luxuriance, the view from the slope on which the house once stood, and now its ruin, was like a dream of beauty. Who that has whiled away a summer afternoon on the spot but has come away entranced with its beauty! Entranced—and yet murmuring the old-time and yet ever-fresh moral—*sic transit*.

And so it is; the men whose history is blended with the fair ruin are but names; yet what names! Sir Christopher Hatton—

“ Whose bushy beard and shoe-strings green,
Whose high-crown'd hat and satin doublet
Moved the stout heart of England's queen
Though Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it,”

was one of the great figures of a great reign. Born at Holdenby in 1548, and becoming in due course a student of the Inner Temple, he came while yet a young man under the notice of Queen Elizabeth, who took a decided liking for him, and advanced him rapidly. This advancement, indeed, was almost as rapid as the growth of Jonah's

gourd. In 1587 he was made Lord Chancellor, to the great chagrin of those over whose heads he had been promoted. But, like Raleigh, Essex, and other favourites of the "great Eliza," he held his position on a precarious tenure. He grew to greatness under the sunshine of royal favour; he withered when it was overclouded. The cloud came in the shape of a demand for the payment of an old debt to the queen, and the annoyance it caused brought on a fever, of which he died (1591), notwithstanding her Majesty's efforts to rally him by cordial broths brought to him, as is said, with her own royal hands. Which circumstance caused Fuller to draw the moral that "no pulleys can draw up a heart once cast down, though a queen herself should set her hand thereto."

It was Sir Christopher Hatton who built Holmby House, though the family had become possessed of the manor of Holdenby through marriage, early in the sixteenth century. The estates passed to his nephew, Sir William Newport, with remainder to his godson and heir male, Sir Christopher Hatton. This Sir Christopher, in 1608, conveyed the mansion-house and manor to James I. for life, the remainder to Charles Duke of York, his second son in tail male, with remainder to his Majesty's heirs and successors. In 1625 the Duke of York became king; then ensued the struggle between the Crown and Parliament; and Holdenby, with the rest of the royal demesnes, was seized and held by the Parliamentarians. When the battle of Naseby had been fought and lost, Charles fled to Leicester; thence he went to Southgate, a favourite resort of his; and from there, proceeding northwards, fell in with and surrendered to the Scotch army at Newark-on-Trent (1645). Having been sold by them to the Parliament, Charles was removed to his own house of Holmby, where he assumed, though always under the surveillance of the Parliamentary Com-

missioners, something of the sovereign state. He gave receptions to the country gentlemen of the neighbourhood, and accepted the homage paid him by the common people.

His Majesty's chief amusements were chess and bowling. To enjoy the latter, the green at Holmby being out of order, he was wont to ride almost daily either to Althorp or to Boughton. On one of these occasions a Major Bosville, disguised as a rustic, tarried for the king on Brampton Bridge with a fishing-rod in his hand, as if he had been whipping the stream, and sought to convey to him letters from the queen and Prince Charles. The attempt failed, however, and Bosville was captured; what became of him, however, is not known.

Another similar attempt to convey secret information to the royal prisoner was made about a month afterwards, the agent in this case being Mary Cave, daughter of Mr. William Cave, of Stanford. According to Baker, the lady, in order to attain her end, "engaged a female friend, who resided in the neighbourhood of Holdenby, to visit the landlady of Captain Abbot, one of the King's Guards, and through the landlady's influence to persuade the captain to procure her the honour of kissing the king's hand; which having accomplished she apprised Mrs. Cave of her success, and contracted with her landlady to receive her as a visitor, and endeavour through the captain to obtain for her also the honour of an introduction to his majesty, by which means she hoped to put the letter into his hands. Mrs. Cave came, and the captain had good-naturedly, but unsuspiciously, acceded to the request, when the landlady imparted the plot to her husband, who, though a royalist and favourable to the design, dared not run the risk of detection, and divulged the secret to the captain. On the appointed day (May 11) the captain, who had apprised the Commissioners of the circumstance, accompanied Mrs. Cave,

who had no suspicion of having been betrayed, to Holdenby: and on her arrival she was carried into a room, but, notwithstanding the most diligent search, nothing was found upon her. The letter was accidentally discovered a few days after behind the hangings of the room, where it seems she contrived to slip it whilst she stood with her back to the hangings conversing with the ladies who searched her."

Not long after, the king was the central figure in a still more memorable scene—one that brought his life at Holdenby to a close. The struggle pending between the Army and Parliament to decide whose captive he was to be, soon approached a crisis. The Army, conscious of its increasing power, determined to assert its authority. By means of a petition conveyed to the king, in which the leaders of the army, hinted at restoring him "to his honour, crown, and dignity," they had contrived to inspire him with some confidence in their intentions, and he fell into the plot they had arranged to get him into their power.

One afternoon when the king was playing bowls at Althorp, the attention of the Commissioners who accompanied him was directed to a soldier in the uniform of Fairfax's regiment, who mingled in the throng of spectators and evinced much curiosity as to what was going on. At length Colonel Greaves, commander of the small garrison of Holmby, accosted the man, and inquired what was going on in the army, and, to encourage him, bade him not be afraid. The soldier boldly answered that he was "not afraid of him or of any man in the kingdom," and straightway began to inveigh against the Parliament. There had spread a rumour that a large troop of cavalry was in the neighbourhood, and the colonel asked the stranger if he had heard of them. "I have done more than hear of them," was the reply; "I saw them yesterday within

thirty miles of Holmby:" they had in fact rendezvoused on Harlestone Heath the previous night. Hereupon followed mysterious whispers; the king quitted the Green; and the guards at Holmby House were doubled.

A few hours later a squadron of fifty horse, led by the suspicious-looking soldier just mentioned, who was no other than Cornet Joyce, drew up before the house. Joyce pretended to the Commissioners that, hearing there was an intention to steal the king away, the army had sent this body of cavalry to protect him. He was allowed to place his guards, and the Commissioners promised that he should shortly receive their commands.

About midnight Joyce appeared with the remainder of his cavalry (numbering some 700 in all), and demanded to see the king. Colonel Greaves and Major-General Brown (who was in command of the garrison at Holmby with Colonel Greaves), being alarmed, ordered their men to stand to their arms; but they, seeing Joyce's men to be their fellow-soldiers, fraternized with them.

Other accounts affirm that Joyce stated that his object was to bring the governor, Colonel Greaves, to trial before a council of war for having scandalized the army; but that Greaves, being aware of the hostile feeling against him, had taken to flight; whereupon Joyce, concluding that he had gone for succours, at ten at night demanded an audience of the king.

Some unwillingness being shown on the part of the Commissioners, the cornet placed sentinels at their chamber-doors, and proceeded himself by the back-stairs directly to the king's bedchamber. The grooms, being much surprised, desired him to lay aside his arms, and assured him that in the morning he should see the king; but he, raising sword and pistol, insisted on having the door opened, and made so much noise that it waked his majesty, who sent out

word that he would not rise nor speak with him till the morrow, upon which the cornet retired in a huff.

The king, rising early in the morning, sent for Joyce, who with great boldness told his majesty he was commanded to remove him. Whereupon Charles desired that the Commissioners might be called; to which Joyce replied "they had nothing to do but to return back to the Parliament." Being asked to produce his instructions, he told his majesty "he should see them presently;" and straightway drew up his troops in the inner court, and, pointing to them, said, "There, sire, are my instructions." The king having taken a good look at them, and finding them to be proper men, well mounted and armed, told the cornet with a smile that "his instructions were in fair characters, legible without spelling." Joyce then pressed Charles to go along with him; but his majesty refused, unless the Commissioners might accompany him; to which the cornet replied that it was a matter of indifference to him, and that they might go if they would.

After some further conference, the king consented to accompany Joyce and his troopers; the officers of Holmby and the Commissioners meanwhile protesting loudly against his majesty's removal, and calling upon the soldiers to maintain the authority of Parliament, which they refused to do, saying they knew well enough what they did.

Accordingly after breakfast Charles got into his coach, and, attended by a few servants, was conducted by Joyce to Hinchinbrook, near Huntingdon, where he was entertained with great respect. The next day he had an interview with Cromwell, Fairfax, Ireton, and other officers in the gardens of Sir John Cutts at Childerly, where, upon their denying that he had been brought from Holmby by their authority, he said: "Unless you hang up Joyce, I

will not believe what you say." But the cornet was in no fear of hanging.

This seizure of the king was a great mystery to his contemporaries; but it is now generally supposed to have been the act of Cromwell and Ireton, that the army might become master of the sovereign; and to which they had cleverly paved the way by leading his majesty to believe the army leaders were willing to join with him against the Presbyterian party. The story of the seizure is variously told by different authorities; but the main points will be found the same in Clarendon, Herbert, Holmes, Whitelock, "The True and Impartial Narrative," and the Parliamentary History.





Castle Ashby.

“O subtle love, a thousand wiles thou hast.”

“There was in the days of Queen Bess,
A merchant right worthy and true ;
John Spenser he hight, and he was a knight,
As rich as the city then knew.”



NO place in the county is better known than Castle Ashby, and none is worthier to be known and admired. Its beautiful situation, its charming grounds, and the taste and art that have been expended in its surroundings—all tend to give the spot a mingled interest. It has, too, its history, its legends, its romantic and other associations, full of charm. Of all the stories, however, connected therewith, the one narrated of the Compton who, more than any other, extended the foundation of the family fortunes, is the most interesting. It has been told in a ballad, of which the stanza quoted above is the foremost. The worthy there alluded to was Sir John Spenser, who was Lord Mayor of London in 1594, and who, on his death in 1609, was reputed to have left eight hundred thousand pounds—a sum which must have appeared fabulous in those days. In the *Book of Days*, it is said that his funeral was attended by a prodigious multitude, including three hundred and twenty poor men, who each had a large dole of eatables, drinkables, and wearable articles given him. Ten years before his death, the account

goes on to say, "rich Spenser," as he was called, had his soul grievously crossed by a daughter, who insisted upon giving her hand and heart to a "slenderly endowed" young nobleman. And thereby hangs our tale.

This slenderly endowed scion of nobility was no other than Lord William Compton, the heir to the estates of a rising, but by no means wealthy family. The original seat of the Comptons was Compton-Winyates—the latter dissyllable, we are told, being a corruption, or the Saxon form of "Vineyards," a word, therefore, attesting the high antiquity of the family. Castle Ashby was a later acquisition of the Comptons. Their name appears in deeds as early as the twelfth century, and, indeed, they seem to have held an estate under Turchill, the Saxon Sheriff, in the days of the Confessor. The Comptons have ever been a rising family; but it was not until William Compton, who was left fatherless, when Henry VII. was king, at the age of eleven years, that the family assumed the high position which they have since maintained. William Compton was page to Henry, Duke of York, the second son of Henry VII. When the Duke of York ascended the throne as Henry VIII., William Compton became a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, and was advanced to various offices and trusts. He was knighted and created Chancellor of Ireland, and he led the rear-guard of the king's troops at Florence. He it was who acquired Castle Ashby, and built the present "fair mansion" of Compton-Winyates on his paternal estate, bringing much of the material from the Castle of Tulbrook, on the north side of the Avon. Sir William had been dead sixty years when his grandson died in 1588, and the Lord William Compton of our story succeeded to the estates.

At this period "the great Eliza" had reigned thirty-one years. In London the founders of many noble houses were

engaged in commerce, and making those princely fortunes which enabled them "to found a family," as the saying goes. Among the princely merchants of the time was Sir John Spenser, knight, an opulent clothworker, who had been more than once Lord Mayor, and had distinguished himself by his munificence and hospitality. We are told, for instance, that when Henri Quatre sent the Marquis of Rosny, better known as the Duke of Sully, as his ambassador to England, Sir John entertained and lodged him in the most sumptuous manner at his own cost. His public spirit and generosity made him a great favourite with Queen Elizabeth, while his enormous riches caused him to be an object of wonder to the people. So great, indeed, was the repute of his wealth, that, the legend is, a pirate of Dunkirk once came over, with a following of twelve men, with the view of capturing "rich Spenser," as he rode in the evening to Canonbury House, at Islington, where he resided, the idea being, of course, to secure a handsome sum for his ransom. But we have the best authority for saying that

"The best-laid schemes of mice and men,
Gang aft agley."

And so it was in this case. As luck would have it, Sir John stayed in the city the night this little plot was to be carried out, and so unwittingly frustrated the designs of the piratical crew.

But the rich Sir John was subsequently made the victim of another ruse, which, fortunately or unfortunately, resulted in more success. For, says the ballad,

"Sir John had an only child,
A daughter most fair to see—
Tall, comely, and straight as a sapling slim,
A winsome maiden was she.

Her eyes were brown as the hazel nut,
And nut-brown was her hair ;
And many a breast Elizabeth filled
With anxious thought and care."

Elizabeth Spenser, as the heiress of Canonbury, was naturally much sought after by the young men, both noble and simple, of her time ; for, to say nothing of her personal charms, she was the richest heiress of the day, her father being commonly reputed to be worth well on to a million sterling. Accordingly we are told—

"The maiden was woo'd by high and by low,
By tradesman, clerk, and knight,—
Some woo'd her for love, some woo'd her for pelf,
And some for very despite,
For they knew Sir John in his heart had vowed
She should wed but a city wight."

In pursuance of the resolution that his daughter should have none but a sober citizen and merchant for her husband, Sir John discouraged the visits at Canonbury of nobles and gentles of whatever degree, while, we can well imagine, he encouraged those of eligible young men of business. But his precautions were of little avail. Love has a knack of going contrary to the wishes of those who would direct it, and such proved to be the case in regard to Elizabeth Spenser. She set her affections on young Lord William Compton, one of the "fly-blows of the Court," for whom bluff Sir John had supreme contempt, and was loved by him in return. How they managed to bring about their interviews, those "stolen sweets" that are said to be the best, we are left to imagine, for Sir John, on finding how the wind blew, put stricter watch over his daughter and the portals of his house. He even got himself into difficulty by his determined opposition to Lord Compton's

suit. "It seems," says the *Book of Days*, "to have been rather a perilous thing for a citizen in those times to thwart the matrimonial designs of a nobleman, even towards a member of his own family." John Chamberlain, who has been styled the Horace Walpole of his day, so far as the writing of gossiping letters is concerned, adverts in one of his epistles to the troubles connected with the love affairs of Elizabeth Spenser. "Our Sir John Spenser," he says, "who was the last week committed to the Fleet for a contempt, and hiding away his daughter, who, they say, is contracted to the Lord Compton; but now he is out again, and by all means seeks to hinder the match, alleging a pre-contract to Sir Arthur Henningham's son." Gossip Chamberlain goes on to say that upon Sir John's "beating and ill-using her (possibly pure gossip), she was sequestered to one Baker's, a proctor, and from thence to Sir Henry Billingsley's, where she yet remains till the matter be tried." He concludes by observing that, "If the obstinate and self-willed fellow should persist in his doggedness—as he protests he will—and give her nothing, the poor lord shall have a warm catch."

Sir John did "persist in his doggedness," and by so doing forced matters beyond interference of his or of the law. As is usual in such cases, the knight reckoned pretty much without his host, and one fine day he found himself totally nonplussed, for, as the song says—

"A man of resouree was Lord William,
A maid of decision was she,
And once when rich Spenser came home,
He found that his prisoner was free."

The manner in which the elopement was effected was, if the legend be true, as bold in design and execution as the stratagem resorted to by Cleopatra to gain access to Cæsar.

The Egyptian queen bribed a slave to carry her into the august presence in a sack : Lord William took upon himself the matutinal duties of a baker's man, and, leaving his loaves at the great man's house, took away his love. The "runagate" god is seldom without allies, and probably this scheme was not carried out without the connivance of some third party in the house.

"And this was the way it was done—
A quaint bold ruse you will say ;
Sir Will as a baker's boy bore
His love in his basket away."

Be that as it may, certain it is that before Sir John could interfere his daughter Elizabeth was Lady Compton. Naturally enough, he was deeply irritated at her conduct, and time seemed only to make his resentment deeper. Friends interceded, but their good intentions only tended to keep alive his bitter sense of wrong. In all probability the estrangement would have continued to the end of the chapter, had not another and a more influential friend taken the matter in hand. To quote again from the ballad—

"A year had scarcely gone by,
Ere one fine morning Queen Bess
Bade Spenser to Greenwich repair—
For what he could hardly guess.
But soon all his doubts were resolved :
'Sir John,' said the monarch in glee,
'To a young knave by parents disowned,
I'd have you be sponsor with me.'"

Surprised as the knight was at the request, he readily consented, and, still deeply incensed at his daughter's disobedience, promised to adopt her majesty's *protégé* as his own. The queen bowed her acknowledgments with a gracious smile, and intimated that the ceremony must be private, as befitted the condition of her poor little charge.

Sir John signified his acquiescence, and the Court proceeded to her majesty's private chapel, where the baptismal rite was duly solemnized, the queen giving the name of Spenser to the boy. The god-father was so struck by the singularity of the incident and the beauty of the child, that he at once proposed to make his new namesake his sole heir, and in order that he might not have the power to change his mind asked her majesty to accept his estates in trust for the infant, which he promised to settle irrevocably by deed. The queen accepted the promise, and said with a smile that she knew it would be faithfully kept.

“ But, lo, the surprise yet in store
For the old man with sorrow oppress'd ;
' Let the parents come in,' said the Queen,
And his children obeyed the behest.
Lord William his lady led in,
Her bright eyes with weeping all red ;
Then, throwing her down on her knees,
For her father's forgiveness she pled.”

The plea of the lady, echoed by her husband, was, to the astonishment of the knight, taken up by the queen, who, before he could speak, said, “ The child you have adopted is your own grandson. Take his parents also into your favour ; give to them your forgiveness, and make this one of the happiest hours in a queen's life ! ”

“ Sir John was all taken aback,
He staggered and stammer'd, but soon,
Aweeping and clasping them both,
He granted the Queen her boon.”

Such is the story told of the elopement of the heiress of Canonbury, and her reconciliation with her father, who lived, as we have seen, until 1609, when his promise of bequeathing his wealth to his daughter, and his daughter's children was fulfilled.

It is said that the possession of so much wealth affected the brain of Lord William, and that in consequence the Lord Chamberlain had for a time to take his affairs in charge. But if such was the case with him, Elizabeth, his wife, showed herself by no means unequal to the charge. She knew the value of money, and how to spend it, and that in a right royal and munificent manner. The well-known letter she addressed to her lord on the subject probably had the effect of curing any softness of the brain on the part of her husband occasioned by the imagination of so much wealth. In the first place she required £1,600 per annum for her "apparell," and in addition thereto £600 "for the performance of charitable works." Then she would have "three horses for my owne sadle," besides horses for her two gentlewomen, and for her coaches, and her "gentleman usher." She enumerates the attendants and servants she must have—six or eight gentlemen, four footmen, &c. "And for myself, besides my yearly allowance, I would have 20 gown apparel, six of them excellent good ones, eight of them for the country, and six others of them very excellent good ones. Also I would have to put in my purse £2,000, and £200, and so you to pay my debts. Also I would have £8,000 to buy me jewels, and £6,000 for a pearl chain." After enumerating other "desires," Lady Compton expresses a wish that "you would pay your debts, building Ashby House, and purchase lands," and concludes with—"I pray you, when you be an earl, to allow me a £1,000 more than now I desired, and double attendance." Lord Compton was advanced to the earldom of Northampton by James I., and his son, the second earl of that name, was the famous Spencer Compton, who fell, fighting for Charles I. against the Parliamentarians, at the battle of Hopton Heath.



Ashby St. Legers.

“The man was noble,
But with his last attempt he wip’d it out ;
Betray’d his country, and his name remains
To the ensuing age abhorr’d.”



O Ashby St. Legers belongs the unenviable notoriety of being one of the places most intimately connected with the Gunpowder Plot. Robert Catesby, the original contriver of the treason, was heir to the estates at Ashby, where his widowed mother was at the time residing. He was an ardent convert to the Catholic faith, and the bosom friend of Father Garnet, the prefect of the English Jesuits. A man of more than common parts, he inveigled, by his persuasive eloquence, several of the other twelve chief conspirators. They are believed to have met in the room over the gateway, and the apartment is still known by the villagers of the neighbourhood as the “Plot Room.” The gate-house is the only part of the ancient manor of the Catesby family that remains to this day.

The family of Catesby was of ancient date, and several of its members had made themselves politically prominent before the framer of the Gunpowder Plot had won his infamous notoriety. Sir William Catesby was one of the three favourites who ruled the kingdom under Richard III.

(the others being Sir Richard Ratcliffe and Viscount Lovell), on whom the following humorous distich was made :—

“The Rat, the Cat, and Lovell our dog,
Rule all England under the Hog,”

alluding to the king's adoption of a boar as one of the supporters of the royal arms.

After the battle of Bosworth, this Sir William Catesby was beheaded at Leicester, and his lands escheated; but Henry VII. (1496) restored them to Catesby's son George, from whom they descended in course of time to Sir William Catesby, who was convicted, during the reign of Elizabeth (1581) of harbouring Jesuits at Catesby Hall, and celebrating mass, which, in consequence of the policy of the Church of Rome, were made penal offences. From 1570 to 1600 the queen and the Protestant religion were constantly exposed to the machinations of the active partisans of the Roman See, who were encouraged by the pope himself. Every pontiff pursued the same course; there being a settled purpose at Rome, if not throughout the entire Romish confederacy, to dethrone Elizabeth and overturn the Anglican Church. To root out heresy by any means within their reach was deemed, or, at all events, was asserted to be, a sacred duty incumbent on all true Catholics. Though the doctrine may be denied at the present day, when both Catholics and Protestants, it may be hoped, have learned more charity and tolerance; yet in Elizabeth's days it was unquestionably not merely believed as an article of faith, for attempts were constantly made to enforce the bull of excommunication of Pius V., from which the treasons in the reigns of Elizabeth and James naturally flowed.

The son and successor of this Sir William Catesby was Robert Catesby, the conspirator, who had severely suffered

in Elizabeth's reign under the penal statutes, and, in revenge, had engaged in many plots against the crown. He took an active part in Essex's rebellion, along with his cousin Tresham, and suffered imprisonment with him in Wisbeach Castle in 1558. Subsequently Catesby endeavoured to bring about an invasion of England by the Spaniards. In his communications with Spain he was aided and abetted by Sir Francis Tresham, another of the conspirators.

The death of Elizabeth (on the eve of Lady-Day, 1603) overthrew the project of an invasion. A fresh attempt, somewhat later, ended equally fruitlessly. These failures, and the nipping of their hopes in the tolerance of James I., well-nigh drove the conspirators to desperation. Then (1604) occurred to Catesby the idea of a general destruction. He confided his scheme to Thomas Winter, the younger son of a small Worcestershire squire, and to John Wright, a master of fence, the former of whom was despatched, in furtherance of the plot, into the Low Countries, where he met with, and secured the services of, Guy or Guido Fawkes.

Fawkes was a native of Yorkshire, and a schoolfellow of Bishop Morton at York. In the Ashmolean Museum, at Oxford, are preserved the rusty and shattered remains of the lantern which Fawkes carried when he was seized. On a brass plate affixed to one side of it is a Latin inscription to that effect, with the addition that it was given to the University in 1641, by Robert Heywood, Proctor of the University. Fawkes appears to have been a soldier of fortune in the Spanish service, and a mere hired servant of the rest of the conspirators, who were nearly all gentlemen of property.

During Winter's absence Catesby had not been idle: he had secured a house adjacent to the Houses of Parliament

in the name of Thomas Percy, who had married Wright's sister, and was in the service of the Earl of Northumberland; from this house it was intended to dig a mine under the House of Lords. A second house was then taken, at Catesby's suggestion, in Lambeth, and placed under the charge of Robert Keyes, another conspirator. But in February, 1605, when Parliament was to have met, they were enabled to hire the cellar under the House of Lords, and so the mine, which had been steadily progressing, was discontinued. The meeting of Parliament, however, was postponed till October. Meanwhile John Grant, Robert Winter, and Thomas Bates, Catesby's servant, had been added to the confederacy.

By May all the preparations were made, the powder stored, and everything so arranged as to make the place look like a store-room. But again it was resolved to prorogue Parliament, and the conspirators were afraid some discovery had been made; but one of the conspirators making it his business to be present at the ceremony of prorogation, discovered, by the demeanour of the Lords Commissioners, that they knew nothing of the plot.

Their fears being thus allayed, the conspirators resolved to invite several other gentlemen of means to join them, with a view to their helping to defray the expenses of the rising that was to follow the destruction of Parliament. In pursuance of this resolution, the Sir Francis Tresham above-mentioned, Sir Everard Digby, and Ambrose Rorkwood, were drawn into the conspiracy and sworn to secrecy. The former had, by the death of his father in the autumn of 1605, just become owner of the Rushton estate, and was in consequence enabled to offer two thousand pounds towards the purposes of the plot. The money thus obtained, or promised, was used in the purchase of arms, &c., for the rising. Sir Everard Digby's estates were at Dunchurch.

in Rutland, and there, when the time should come, was to be a grand gathering as for a hunt.

The discovery of the plot, ostensibly by a note to Lord Mounteagle, brother-in-law of Tresham, but apparently by a previous communication to the Government, is too well known to need repetition. It is now generally believed that Tresham was the betrayer; although by some Mrs. Abingdon, of Hendlip Hall, Worcestershire, is thought to have been the writer of the letter to Lord Mounteagle. He was in Northamptonshire when the letter was delivered, but meeting Catesby and others soon after, he advanced them money, and urged them to leave the country as all was known. They would not believe, however, that the plot was discovered, because no search had been instituted, and thus they lost the ten days betwixt the delivery of the note and the meeting of Parliament. Only when the official visit had been made to the cellar by the Lord Chamberlain did the conspirators resolve on flight. Then, headed by Catesby, they made for Ashby St. Legers, where they arrived at six o'clock in the evening, as Lady Catesby and her guests were about to sit down to supper. The old hall supplied them with arms; equipped with which, and accompanied by several gentlemen who were waiting for them at Ashby, they rode hotly to Dunchurch. There they found a large company assembled, but it became suddenly and considerably less on hearing the disastrous news the arch-conspirators brought from London.

They were now put to their last shift. Gathering together as large a force as they could they made for Wales, thinking to get the Catholic gentry to join them. Instead of receiving any increase, however, their numbers were daily reduced by desertion. Driven to desperation by these disappointments and by the close pursuit of the sheriff, they at last determined to make a stand and fight for it.

This was at Stephen Littleton's house at Holbeach, Worcestershire. Four of the chief conspirators were there killed, including Catesby. Bates, a Northamptonshire man, was taken next day in Shropshire, and was subsequently hanged.

Fawkes' examination took place on the 7th of November, yet Tresham's name was not mentioned in the proclamation issued the same day for the apprehension of the conspirators. He was, however, arrested and committed to the Tower on the 12th of the same month and examined by the Council. He died in the Tower on the 23rd of December. Lord Mounteagle, to whom the letter betraying the plot was sent, was rewarded by a grant of Crown lands and a pension for life ; while Lord Stourton, another brother-in-law, was condemned in the Star Chamber to a fine of six thousand marks on suspicion of participation in the plot.





Titchmarsh.

“A fair attempt has twice or thrice been made
To hire night murderers and make death a trade.”



TITCHMARSH has claims upon our attention for several reasons; but first of all because, although to Aldwinle All Saints belongs the honour of being Dryden's birth-place, Titchmarsh is fairly entitled to the boast inscribed on a monument in the church (the fond tribute of his cousin, Mrs. Creed *), that “he was bred and had his first learning here.” The poet's parents were Erasmus Dryden, third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden, baronet, of Canons Ashby, and Mary, daughter of the Rev. Henry Pickering, rector of Aldwinle All Saints, a younger son of Sir Gilbert Pickering, knight, of Titchmarsh. It has been lately ascertained that the marriage of Dryden's parents took place on October 21st, 1630, in the church of Pilton, a village near Aldwinle; a fact which places it beyond doubt that the poet, born in August, 1631, was the eldest child of his parents, whose issue in all numbered fourteen. A careful examination of the inscription on the tomb of the

* To whom he addressed the impromptu lines on the origin of names, beginning—

“So much religion in your name doth dwell,
Your soul must needs with piety excel.”

Rev. Henry Pickering, Dryden's maternal grandfather, shows that he became rector of Aldwinle All Saints in 1597. It has been generally supposed that he did not become rector until 1647. The difference is of consequence in connection with the tradition of Dryden's birth in the parsonage-house; for if the grandfather was not rector till 1647, why should the poet have been born there in 1631? Malone's conjecture that Mr. Pickering might have been curate there before he became rector was plausible enough to pass muster in lieu of a better explanation. There is now no difficulty in accepting the tradition of Dryden's place of birth, which has always been strong; the room in the parsonage-house in which he is said to have been born having been shown uninterruptedly from his birth till the present time. Nothing is more likely than that he, his mother's first child, should have been born in the house of her parents, who were then old, her father being sixty-nine.

An ancestor of the poet, a Cumberland man, also John Dryden by name, had acquired the estate of Canons Ashby by marriage with the daughter and heir of Sir John Cope, knight. The Drydens and the Pickerings, near neighbours, were connected by marriage before the union of the poet's parents. Sir John Pickering, elder brother of Henry, rector of Aldwinle, had espoused a sister of the poet's father, Erasmus Dryden, or Driden, as the name was then more commonly spelled. This Erasmus Dryden of Titchmarsh was the third son of Sir Erasmus Dryden of Canons Ashby, who was high sheriff of Northamptonshire in the fortieth year of Queen Elizabeth, and was created a knight baronet in the seventeenth year of James I. Both the Drydens and the Pickerings were on the popular side in the great Church and State struggles with Charles I. The poet's father, who was a justice of the peace for Northamp-

tonshire, was probably a "committee-man" of the Commonwealth times; for one of the sneering allusions by Dryden's bitter adversaries of later days, when he was a Court champion and Roman Catholic, was—

"And Bayes was of committee-man's flesh and blood."

Sir Gilbert Pickering, baronet, son of the Sir John above mentioned, and Dryden's first cousin, was made a baronet by Charles I., and was afterwards one of the judges at his trial, but did not sit on the day on which judgment was given. He was high in Cromwell's favour, was chamberlain to the Protector, and one of his peers.

It is said of this Sir Gilbert that, though a zealous Puritan, he was in considerable favour with James I.; for which reason it probably was, as well as for his marked opposition to the Catholics, that, as is alleged, the conspirators in the Gunpowder Treason (his own brother-in-law, Robert Keies, being one of the number), had resolved upon his death, as an episode in the main plot; determining, at the same time, so to conduct the murder as to throw suspicion of the destruction of Parliament upon the Puritans. The following particulars of this intended "episode" are given by Caulfield in his history of the Gunpowder Plot:—

"There was a Mr. Pickering of Titchmarsh-grove in Northamptonshire, who was in great esteem with King James. This Mr. Pickering had a horse of special note for swiftness, on which he used to hunt with the king. A little before the blow was to be given, Mr. Keies, one of the conspirators, and brother-in-law to Mr. Pickering, borrowed his horse of him and conveyed him to London upon a bloody design, which was thus contrived. Fawkes, upon the day of the fatal blow, was appointed to retire himself into St. George's Fields, where this horse was to

attend him to further his escape (as they made him believe) as soon as the Parliament should be blown up. It was likewise contrived that Mr. Pickering, who was noted for a Puritan, should that morning be murdered in his bed, and secretly conveyed away; and also that Fawkes, as soon as he came into St. George's Fields, should be there murdered, and so mangled that he could not be known; upon which it was to be spread abroad that the Puritans had blown up the Parliament house; and the better to make the world believe it, there was Mr. Pickering with his choice horse ready to escape; but that stirred up some who, seeing the heinousness of the fact, and him ready to escape, in detestation of so horrible a deed, fell upon him and hewed him to pieces; and to make it more clear, there was his horse, known to be of special speed and swiftness, ready to carry him away; and upon this rumour a massacre should have gone through the whole land upon the Puritans.

"When the contrivance of this plot was discovered by some of the conspirators, and Fawkes, who was now a prisoner in the Tower, made acquainted with it, whereas before he was made to believe by his companions that he should be bountifully rewarded for his good services to the Catholic cause, now perceiving that, on the contrary, his death had been contrived by them, he therefore freely confessed all that he knew concerning that horrid conspiracy, which, before, all the torments of the rack could not force him to do."

The truth of this story, we are told, "was attested by Mr. William Perkins, who had it from Mr. Clement Cotton, to whom Mr. Pickering gave the above relation."

Concerning the above-mentioned Robert Keies (brother-in-law of Mr. Pickering), who was executed January 31,

1606, for his participation in the Gunpowder Plot, Fuller, in his "Church History," tells the following anecdote:—"A few days before the fatal blow should have been given, Keies, being at Titchmarsh in Northamptonshire, at his brother-in-law's house, Mr. Robert Pickering, a Protestant, he suddenly whipped out his sword, and in merriment made many offers therewith at the heads, necks, and sides of several gentlemen and ladies in his company. It was then taken for a mere frolic, and so passed accordingly; but afterwards, when the treason was discovered, such as remembered his gestures thought he practised what he intended to do when the plot should take effect: that is, to hack and hew, kill and destroy, all eminent persons of a different religion from himself."





Daventry.

“ BRAKENBURY.—Why looks your grace so heavily to-day !

CLARENCE.—O, I have passed a miserable night,
So full of fearful dreams, of ugly sights,
That, as I am a Christian faithful man,
I would not spend another such a night,
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days ;
So full of dismal terror was the time.”



HE local tradition is that Daventry was of Danish origin, and the notion has received countenance, and, as it were, been perpetuated in the Dane and Tree—the rebus of the local “Daintree”—forming the popular badge of the town. The derivation of this abbreviation of the name from some original Dane, who planted his roof-tree beneath the shade of a monarch of the forest that flourished here, is but one of the many attempts that have been made to decide the etymology of the name, but is perhaps the one which will least bear serious examination.

Parenthetically, it may be remarked that this tradition is interesting, in connection with other traditions referring to the Danes, as showing how deep an impression the Danish occupation of these parts made on the popular mind, as well as on local nomenclature. But of this more anon.

The true derivation of the name, like the origin of the town, is a disputed point. Some—Baker among the num

ber—find in “Daventry” a corruption of Bennaventa, which has been identified with the old British settlement on Borough Hill. Perhaps the most likely derivation, however, is that which supposes Daventry to be a combination of the Celtic words *Dwy*, *Avon*, and *Tre*, the first meaning two, the second river, and the third town, the whole signifying “the town of the two rivers,” a perfectly correct description.

But, whatever the origin of the name, there can be little doubt the town is of very ancient date; and most probably Baker is correct in supposing it may date its growth from the decline of the neighbouring British or Roman Station (or both) on Borough Hill.

Tradition attributes the incorporation of the borough to King John, and there is no inherent improbability in the notion, although the earliest extant charter was granted by Queen Elizabeth. Legend connects another John with Daventry, or its immediate neighbourhood, John of Gaunt, “time-honoured Lancaster,” who is traditionally said to have had a “large house or castle” on a site, now called the Burnt-Walls, which adjoins the north side of the Chester turnpike road, and contains about six acres. What ground there is for the legend it is now almost impossible to tell.

There was formerly a priory here, established for monks of the Cluniac order (an offshoot of the Benedictines), and dedicated to St. Mary de Caritas and St. Austin, the apostle of England. The site was granted by the great St. Liz (or Senlis), who has left so many memorials of his piety in this part of the shire. There is now no vestige of the conventual buildings, which are supposed to have stood where the parsonage now is. There is a story about the destruction of the monastery to the following effect :

Wolsey, the great cardinal, having conceived the idea

of perpetuating his fame by the erection of a magnificent collegiate establishment at Oxford, procured a bull from Pope Clement the Seventh, authorizing the dissolution of St. Frideswide Priory in that city, and other lesser monasteries, not exceeding the yearly value of three thousand ducats (£2,000), in aid of his design. This bull was obtained in September, 1524. Five persons, the story goes, were the chief instruments in carrying out this scheme. They accordingly made a demand on the prior and convent of the monastery to hand over certain of their grounds. But the monks refused to accede to the request, and the five persons straightway picked a quarrel with the brotherhood, and gave information to the cardinal against them. The latter thereupon took summary proceedings against the priory, and gave the order for it to be dissolved, and its revenues and possessions applied to the new college. So says Stowe in his "Annals"; and he indignantly attributes the subsequent misfortunes of the parties to the punishment of God for "this irreligious robbery." Though the story is unsupported by authority, it is but just to grant that there is some probability of truth about it. Undoubted as were the evils that had grown about the monastic system, the suppression of the religious houses was attended with a good deal of high-handedness and even downright injustice to the poor. The diversion of the stream of bounty they dispensed from the indigent of the neighbourhoods in which they were situate, and from the humble wayfarer, was of no mean importance, and gave rise to lamentations and denunciations that attest the hardships which were felt to arise therefrom.

" God doth know, the infant yet unborn
Will curse the time the abbeyes were pull'd down.
I pray now where is hospitality ?
Where now may poor distressed people go

For to relieve their need, or rest their bones,
When weary travel doth oppress their limbs ?”

Unquestionably an important event in the history of the country was the dissolution of the monasteries begun by Wolsey, and accomplished by Cromwell; and Daventry was undoubtedly one of the first places to suffer from the spoliation; but the issue of the Carolian Civil War was even still more momentous, and “Daintry” played a part in that great struggle which makes it for ever memorable. Charles I., as we know, spent several days previous to the battle of Naseby at this place, whither he went primarily with a view to revictualling Oxford. The besieged garrison of that city had made a desperate sally and destroyed all the enemy’s works, in consequence of which Sir Thomas Fairfax, the general of the Parliamentary forces, raised the siege and marched to Northampton to look for the king, whose army, fatigued by long action and the siege of Leicester, they thought would be an easy conquest, and might thus end the war at one blow. On the receipt of this intelligence, it was resolved to give up the expedition which had been planned for the recovery of the North from the hands of Parliament, and the army, consisting of some five thousand foot, and about as many horse, were ordered to Daventry, “whither,” we are told, “the king went with a thorough resolution of fighting.” This was on the 7th of June, 1645, a year for ever memorable in British annals. The king took up his quarters at the Wheat Sheaf Inn; his troops were encamped on or about Borough Hill. From here Oxford was revictualled, and a watch kept on the Parliamentary army, which was gradually approaching. On the 11th it marched from Stony Stratford to Wootton; thence next day to Kislingbury; and on the 13th to “Gilling,” according to Mastin, a house near to Naseby, long since destroyed. The king’s army is now in sight,

and there is joy among the Roundheads at the prospect of a brush to-morrow, for Cromwell has arrived in camp, and has been "received with shouts."

But there is no such rejoicing in the Royalist ranks. There the order is to decamp, and all this night sullen preparations are being made to march northward on the morrow. Why this sudden resolution not to encounter the enemy? Ah, thereby hangs a tale!

Two nights before, about two hours after the king had retired to rest—so runs the story—some of his attendants, hearing an uncommon noise in his chamber, went into it, when they found his majesty sitting up in bed, greatly agitated, but saw nothing that could have produced the sounds they fancied they had heard. The king, trembling, inquired the cause of their alarm; they told him, and his majesty then explained to them how he had been startled by a vision, or a dream, he knew not well which, wherein Lord Strafford (of unhappy memory) had appeared to him, and after upbraiding him for his unkindness, advised him by no means to fight the Parliamentary army, then near at hand, for in it was one whom he would never conquer by arms.

"But in the midmost watches of the night,
 Ah, what was it that waked him in affright?
 The king's heart leapt,
 As in the dim light he beheld the dead
 And awful front of Strafford. 'What,' he cried,
 'I thought that thou hadst died?'
 'Ay, liege, my king, I did;
 Men die indeed who trust to prince's favour;
 Yet came I not to chide you, but to bid,
 If so I may, that you no longer waver,
 But lie you northward; for there's close at hand
 One you shall ne'er o'ercome with armed band.'"

No wonder the king trembled, and the attendants too,

as he told them of his "fearsome dream," and how he thought—

"'Twere better not to tempt a battle there,
But northward to repair."

The attendants endeavoured to reassure his majesty, telling him that the occasion of his fright was but a dream, caused, maybe, by something he had taken at supper that did not agree with him. But the vision, or whatever it was, had made a deep impression, and his majesty slept but fitfully until morning, when he arose with a full determination to take the ghost's warning and go northward :

" Yet when the day came and him Rupert rallied
About his nocturnal fright,
He once more lingered and dallied,
And again resolved to fight."

This resolution Charles maintained until night, when he retired with the full intention of waiting for and giving Fairfax battle.

" But ere soft sleep his eyelids downwards pressed,
The ghostly form of yesternight appeared,
And with majestic mien,
Though angry brow,
Foretold the sad monarch how
The day would come, and that right soon he feared,
When he would rue most keen
His ghostly councils slighted ;
'For,' said he, 'your cause is blighted
Beyond retrieve
If but another day you tarry here.'"

The ghost then departed, with "a farewell austere," at the same time assuring the king this was the last time he would be permitted to give him advice. The king, no doubt,

sincerely hoped it would be, not liking the "questionable shape" in which his counsellor appeared.

"Next morning, ere the crowing of the cock,
King Charles was up, determined to be off,
Let who would jibe and mock ;
But with the clang of arms, and Rupert's laughing scoff
At night-born fancies, wavering came again :
Now he would stay ;
Now he would go and fight some other day ;
And so till evening, when resolve was ta'en
Not to abide the battle ; but too late,
For already was the foe upon his rear
By Naseby, and the one whom Charles must fear
Was there to seal his fate."

"If his majesty," says the account from which I borrow the story, "had taken the advice of the friendly ghost, and marched northward the next day, where the Parliament had few English forces, and where the Scots were become very discontented, his affairs might have taken a prosperous issue ; or if he had marched immediately into the west to join Lord Goringe, who had there a good body of horse, he might afterwards have fought on more equal terms. But the king, fluctuating between the apprehensions of his imagination and the reproaches of his courage, remained another whole day at Daintree in a state of inactivity." At length, however, the king's superstition got the better of his judgment, and he decided to proceed northwards the next day, notwithstanding the enemy were within some eight miles of them. Still, however, keeping his resolution, they marched the next morning, taking the road towards Harborough, to which place Fairfax also directed his course, flanking the king.

At night the king's van is at Harborough, his rear at Naseby, where Ireton beats them up and takes some

prisoners. Charles is sleeping at Lubbenham, where there is still a "king's chamber," when he is roused up by the fugitives. A council of war is at once held, and again the resolution is taken (this time there is hardly any other alternative) to turn back and fight the Roundheads. Accordingly, when the main body of the Parliamentary army arrive at Naseby, at five o'clock on the morning of the 14th, "great bodies of his (the king's) troops are seen coming over the hill from Harborough towards us." The result, so disastrous for Charles, is well known, and we need hardly to be told now—

" Full often in the mournful after days,
When many a field had been well fought and lost,
And the king was sorely crost,
It repented him most keen, the legend says,
That he the Spectre's warning disobeyed,
And for the battle stayed."

Charles cautioned those who knew anything about this warning never to mention it.

The story, it should be said, is based on the authority of one who writes the account as he received it from one who was a witness of what he reported, and was first published in the History of Southwell, under the title, *Coritani Lacrimantes*.





Naseby.

“ At the gruesome hour of midnight,
From his grave did the drummer awake,
And up and down the *réveille*,
With his kettle drum he did make.

The drum resounded strangely—
Had a loud and ghostly tone,
So that the soldiers awakened
Who to the grave had gone.

* * * *

At the same still hour of midnight
The field-marshal rose up again,
And slowly came hitherward riding,
With his staff, o’er the silent plain.”



ASEBY (or Navesby, as it was written by some old writers) stands in the first rank of Northamptonshire places famous for their historical associations and memorials. Occupying, as it does, the very “central boss” of England, it was a fitting spot, as Mr. James remarks, for “the die of the great national struggle” to be cast. It seems to have been marked out by nature to be as conspicuous an object in the nation’s annals as it is in the surrounding landscape. For miles round on every side its tall, graceful spire, soaring upwards *d’un seul jet*, is a landmark and beacon; while the number of churches which can be seen from one part of the village or another is somewhat astonishing. The village

itself is pleasant enough, though it stands on a cold, bare ridge, sufficiently elevated to be the watershed of three important river-systems, those, namely, of the placid Nene, the devious Welland, and the "sweet flowing" Avon. It used, however, to be a wretched enough place, and was doubtless such when Charles I., who had retired from Daventry to Harborough, hearing that the Parliamentary army under Fairfax was closer upon his heels than he had expected, held a council of war, as tradition says, at the old hall at Lubbenham, and it was determined to face the enemy, whose van had reached Naseby, and to fight—

"For God, for the cause, for the Church, for the laws,
For Charles, King of England, and Rupert of the Rhine."

Shortly after my first introduction to "Northamptonian earth" I paid a visit to Naseby, which from my earliest acquaintance with history had been surrounded with a glamour of fascinating interest, as the theatre on which one of our most fateful national dramas had been enacted. It was the summer season and the gorse was in bloom, making the wide and silent plain gay with its golden sheen. I had marked the various features of the landscape: the hill where Fairfax's army lay, and the opposite elevation over which, on the fatal 14th of June, 1645, King Charles's troops were seen coming from Harborough; the hollow, about the still existing hedges of which the main tug of war is said to have taken place; and had mused—as one somehow will muse when man's titanic schemes and his frail mortality comes strikingly in a contrast—beside the stagnant pools said to mark the spots where rude graves were dug for the dead of "Naseby fight," in which

" . . . hapless Charles beheld his fortunes cross'd,
His forces vanquished, and his kingdom lost."

I had spent several hours on the field, and was wending my way back towards the village, when I was overtaken by a labouring man, with whom I fell into conversation. He was of the purely bucolic type, illiterate and uncouth, but civil and full of that rural gossip so interesting to the student of men and manners. But what makes me remember the man so well is that he gave me the first hint of the existence of a local legend anent the battle of Naseby. He had doubtless seen me wandering about the fields, and one of his first remarks, after the "time o' day" had been passed, was a query whether I had heard tell that there was a saying that every year, when the day of the month came round, those that took part in the great battle came back at midnight and fought it over again. I said I had not heard of the legend, whereupon my informant told me that he had often heard the story when a child, and that many, in consequence, were afraid to go over the field by night. Subsequently I came across a note respecting this legend in some antiquarian or other work, but I have unfortunately mislaid my reference thereto, and so, at present, can give no other authority for the following poetic form of the legend appended than that here adduced.

THE SPECTRAL BATTLE.

" Yearly on the field of Naseby,
 In the fragrant month of June,
 Silent as the stars that glimmer
 When the night is at its noon,
 Hosts of warriors rise and muster
 'Neath the shadows of the moon ;
 Hosts of warriors, grim and stalwart,
 Glistening in their armour bright,
 Taking each his place and order
 In the pale and weird light,
 Waiting thus with arms all ready
 For the word to start the fight.

On the south the Roundheads muster,
Hugging well the furzy slope ;
On the north King Charles's squadrons,
With Prince Rupert as their hope,
Top the hill, and gaze intently,
Eager with the foe to cope.

Charles, the king, is sad, foreboding
Nought but ill, as well he may,
For at Daintry yester midnight
He was warned to shun the day,
But his fate compels him madly,
And he needs must bide the fray.

Charles, the king, all gloomy, shade-like,
Moves along the ghostly line,
Scans his pikemen, scans his troopers,
As they stand in pale moonshine,
Marks the threat'ning ranks of Fairfax,
Then for battle gives the sign.

Still all silent move the masses,
Rupert leading with the horse ;
Up the hill his phantom squadrons
Charge and rout the flanking force,
But the main shock of the battle
Joins amid the valley's gorse.

There, amongst the golden blossom,
Reels the battle fierce and fell ;
Many a heap of mangled warriors
Of the furious onset tell ;
But not long the issue doubtful—
Cromwell wields his fighters well.

Like a feud of ancient fable,
Wherein heroes fight and die,
Lo, the spectral contest rages
Till King Charles's troopers fly !
Vainly would he turn the battle,
For his fateful hour is nigh.

As a host of scattered cloud-shapes
 Haste athwart the darksome vault,
 So his rent and 'spersed battalions
 Fly without or stay or halt ;
 Then the king, when all is ruined,
 Flies to sadly rue his fault.

Had he ta'en the phantom's warning,
 Shunn'd the fight on Naseby's plain,
 Chang'd had been his destined fortune—
 So he mused, but mused in vain,
 Till the glooms of night involving
 Shut him from the world again.

Yearly thus the royal warriors,
 From their crowded graves arise,
 Greet their king as, newly risen,
 There he meets their ghostly eyes,
 Then once more close in the battle
 With the foe that near them lies.

Mortal eye may seldom see it—
 That dread fight for kingly sway ;
 Yet 'tis thus e'er re-enacted
 In the mid-June night they say—
 Fought again in gloom and silence,
 And must be for many a day."

This legend of Naseby is by no means a unique example of the kind. It appears to be a very ancient superstition that the ghosts of heroes periodically haunted the scene of their crowning earthly conflict ; but it appears to have been more particularly the case when the said conflict was disastrous to the hero more nearly concerned. Zedlitz, the Austrian poet, has made use of the fancy in his beautiful poem, "The Midnight Review," a translation of which is quoted from at the head of this chapter. Napoleon is here the hero, and all those who fell under his banner arose and joined in the ghostly review—

“ — those who were up-frozen
In northern ice and snow,
And those who lay to Southward,
Where fierce the sun-beams glow ;
And those whom Nile-mud covers,
And the hot Arabian sand,
Arose from their graves instanter,
And took their guns in hand.”

The great commander gives the watchword, “France,” and the phantom host dissolves. It would be curious to trace the antiquity and genesis of these superstitions.

There is another story connected with Naseby and its battle, which, improbable as it is, should find a place in a collection like this. I refer to the allegation that Cromwell's remains were buried on the field of Naseby. Banks is my authority ; and I give the narrative in his own words, premising merely that his statement is apparently based on the sole dictum of one “Barkstead, the regicide's son, who was about fifteen years of age at the time of Cromwell's death.” “The said Barkstead's father, being lieutenant of the Tower, was a great confidant of Cromwell's, and did, among other such confidants, in the time of his illness, desire to know where he would be buried ; to which the Protector observed, ‘where he had obtained the greatest victory and glory, and as nigh the spot as could be guessed where the heat of the action was, viz., in the field at Naseby, in com. Northamptonshire.’ At midnight, soon after his death, the body (being embalmed, and wrapped in a leaden coffin) was in a hearse conveyed to the said field, Mr. Barkstead himself attending by order of his father, close to the hearse. Being come to the field, they found about the midst of it a grave dug about nine feet deep, with the green sod laid carefully at one side, and the mould on the other ; in which the coffin being put, the

grave was instantly filled up, and the green sod laid exactly flat upon it, care being taken that the surplus mould should be clean removed. Soon after the like care was taken that the ground should be plowed up, and it was sowed successively with grain." This Mr. Barkstead, Banks informs us (in his "Life of Cromwell"), as if to clinch his narrative, "now frequents Richards' coffee-house within Temple Bar."

More trustworthy is the tradition that "Old Noll" was near coming by his death on that fatal field. It happened thus. An officer in the king's army, who knew Cromwell, "advanced briskly from the head of his troops to exchange a single bullet with him." Cromwell advanced, the forces on both sides meanwhile "forbearing to come in." The combatants' pistols having been discharged, the cavalier, with a flanking back blow of a broad-sword, chanced to cut the ribbon that held Cromwell's murrion, and with a draw threw it off his head. He was about to repeat the stroke, when Cromwell's party came to his rescue. One of his troopers alighting, threw him up his head-piece, which he caught hastily, and clapped on the wrong way, and so fought with it the rest of the day. The story is given by Mastin in his history of Naseby. A somewhat similar one is told of Fairfax.





Kirby.

“ Kit Hatton ! Kit Hatton !
I rede ye beware
Of the flash from the cloud
And the flight through the air !
When the stars of thy destiny
Looms in the sky,
To others unclouded, but
Red to thine eye,
Though men see no sign in
The threatening air—
Kit Hatton ! Kit Hatton !
I rede ye beware ! ”



F all domestic ruins, says the Rev. Thomas James, in his “History and Antiquities of Northamptonshire,” the saddest by far is that of Kirby Hall. Buried in its lime and chestnut avenues and native wood, in the inmost part of the midmost county—so utterly concealed that you might pass within fifty yards of one of the finest houses in the kingdom without knowing that a house was there—it was spoken of as the retreat for the Court of George III. in the event of the threatened invasion. Built originally by the Staffords, it was completed for Lord Keeper Hatton by the famous John Thorp, while the inner court was fashioned into its existing state by Inigo Jones for Lord Hatton, Controller of the Household in the time of Charles I.

Then it was that the fair house of Kirby attained the zenith of its glory. Immediately afterwards it began to wane, and now Mutability, "writ large," is the inscription it bears to the thoughtful eye.

"The great world spins for ever down
The ringing grooves of change,"

says Mr. Tennyson, and the words might be taken as a motto for our great families. To this fair house in Rockingham Forest (of which the Lords Hatton were rangers), came a goodly cavalcade one day in 1589,—no other than Sir Christopher Hatton and Queen Elizabeth, with their respective retinues. The reception given to "the great Eliza" by her loyal subjects of Northamptonshire was as hearty as monarch could wish, and was as graciously acknowledged. A splendid banquet was served, after which Sir Christopher and the queen played a game of backgammon; and then, in the pride of his courtly graces,

"My grave Lord-Keeper led the Brawls."

The dance over, he led his sovereign, whose faithful servant and devoted lover he was, down the slippery steps (still called by Elizabeth's name) in the pleasance among the yews, then "clipped by law," to the smooth lawn beyond, and there, where the silver moonlight shed a soft lustre over all, Sir Christopher "bade his royal guest a loving and tender good-night." With the second in descent from the Lord Hatton, who was Controller of the Household to Charles I., the family titles became extinct, and the estates passed to a collateral branch. Merciful, and, indeed, wonderful it was that they did not die out with the previous holder, the "Kit Hatton" of this legend. A spirited ballad, written by "the heir of the Hattons," the Earl of Winchelsea, tells us how young Christopher Hatton was warned

of his impending fate by "the weird woman of Rockinghamshire," when once benighted as he rode at night on affairs of State in the days of "Old Noll":

" 'Avaunt thee, false witch,'
Then, the cavalier said ;
' By the soul of this kingdom
That lacketh a head,
The green of old Gretton
To-morrow shall see
How we deal in this forest
With prophets like thee !
For the stake and the faggot
Of green wood prepare !'
' Kit Hatton ! Kit Hatton !
I rede ye beware !' "

But the sad fatality whereof the witch is supposed to bid him "beware" happened nevertheless ; and long years after the story of the awful occurrence was wont to be told at the fireside of the village inn at Gretton by an aged negro, who, we may be sure, never failed to have eager listeners in the rough and often lawless dwellers in Rockingham Forest. Christopher, second lord and first Viscount Hatton, was appointed to the governorship of the island of Guernsey by Charles II., in succession to his father, as a reward for his services in the royal cause.

" And there many seasons,
Both early and late,
In good Castle Cornet
He governed the State."

Castle Cornet was the stronghold of Guernsey. Situated upon an almost inaccessible rock, fronting the town and harbour of St. Pierre, the capital of the island, it was formerly considered an invincible place. During the great rebellion it sustained a long siege, and was twice vigorously

assaulted by the Parliament forces, though without success. The garrison, however, eventually succumbed to the pangs of hunger. In this castle the governors usually took up their residence, and it was while residing here, in the year 1672, that the terrible catastrophe occurred with which our story is concerned, when

“ From the womb of the cloud
Came in lightning the fire ;
And the witch had told truth
Upon Rockinghamshire.”

There is some little discrepancy as to the time of the catastrophe in the various accounts given of it. Lord Winchelsea puts it at within an hour of the commencement of the year 1673, while Mr. Thomas Dicey, the historian of Guernsey, says it took place about twelve o'clock on Sunday night, the 29th of December. Shortly before that hour, the story saith, Lord Hatton had walked out with a young ensign to take note of the night, which was threatening to become boisterous. Heavy scud was driving up from the south-west, and the sea was sobbing and moaning. The sky was clear in parts, and a number of stars were out—one of which, especially bright, attracted the governor's attention :

“ But yet there loomed one
In the threat'ning air,
That said to Lord Hatton,
' I rede ye beware !'
Then quoth the good lord,
' Pray to heaven that we
The dawn of the morning
In safety may see !
Full angry it looks ——'
But to all ether eye
Seemed the moon never brighter,
Or clearer the sky.”

The governor retired to his private apartment in a house

he had built about two years previously, north by east from the magazine, and very near to it. He had not been long in bed ere a great storm arose, accompanied by thunder and lightning. He slept soundly, however, in spite of the tempest—slept, too, in spite of the terrific flash of lightning that struck and blew up the magazine. Such is one version of the story, though it seems incredible. The ballad tells us that Lord Hatton declared

“ That he never slept once,
Though he lay in his bed,
And at first at a distance,
And then overhead
Came nearer the thunder—
The wind growing high
And the hail beating sharp
On the windows hard by ;
Then he felt underneath him
The bed to move first,
And immediately hearing
A marvellous burst,
Found himself in the air
And in perilous case,
For he knew that the lightning
Had blown up the place.”

There was a large store of powder in the magazine—“Two hundred and fifty good barrels or more,” says the song; and such was the force of the explosion that the castle was almost entirely wrecked. But, marvellous to relate, Lord Hatton was transported in his bed on to the battlements of the wall, which was battered by the sea, and there deposited unhurt. He was awakened, says Dicey, by a shower of hail that fell upon his face and made him sensible where he was. The state of his mind at this moment, what between his anxiety as to his own safety and his dreadful solicitude as to the fate that had overtaken his family, may be better imagined than described. The

house from which his lordship was so carried was razed to the ground, nothing being left standing but a door-case. He was rescued from his perilous position, "on the parapet's edge that o'erhung the deep sea," by a negro servant.

"Then James Chapple, the negro,
So proper and tall,
On his hands and his knees
Brought his lord off the wall,
Safe into the guard-room,
Free from danger and harm,
For the garrison now
Had got up in alarm."

The governor was not the only one who was mercifully and miraculously saved on that terrible night, when so many came by a sudden and terrible death. The Dowager Lady Hatton was found dead in her bed, killed by the falling in of the ceiling of her room; but her two daughters, who were in bed together, though parted by a beam falling betwixt them, were rescued unhurt. Lady Hatton, wife of the governor, and daughter of the Earl of Thanet, was among those who lost their lives.

"Far apart from his lodgings
In childbed she lay,
With none to bring help
On that terrible day."

Her ladyship, being greatly terrified at the thunder and lightning, insisted upon being removed from the chamber she was in to the nursery, where, a few minutes later, while engaged with her woman in prayer, she was killed, along with the latter, by a portion of the wall falling in upon them:—

"And at last on her knees,
With her wrapping gown on,
They found the poor lady,
But she, too, was gone."

In the same room was found a child three years old, "asleep and unimpaired," beneath a beam that had fallen askew. This was Anne Hatton, the governor's eldest daughter, who afterwards became Countess of Nottingham. In the arms of a nurse, who was found dead, was discovered his second daughter, holding in her hands a small silver cup, which she was playing with, and which was "all rumpled and bruised;" yet the infant did not receive the least hurt. The same nurse "had, likewise, one of her hands fixed upon the cradle in which lay my lord's youngest daughter, and the cradle almost filled with rubbish; yet the child received no sort of prejudice." Ensign Covet, the young officer who was conversing with Lord Hatton shortly before the explosion, also met with his death together with a number of other persons.

Most of the rescues here narrated, besides that of his master, Lord Hatton, were effected by, or under the guidance of, the negro, James Chapple, who was afterwards rewarded by the Viscount with a life-pension of twenty pounds a year—a large sum in those days. He lived to tell the tale of how he saved his master's life, for upwards of half a century, in the village of Gretton. Lord Hatton lived to marry again twice, and to have by his third wife a son, William, who died unmarried in 1762, when the titles became extinct.

Such is the story so intimately connected with Kirby Hall, and so striking an episode in the history of a family that occupied a high place in the county of Northants, and played parts of no small moment in great and troublous times. To conclude in the words of the noble ballad writer:—

" Now of good Castle Cornet
I've told you the tale,
Of the witch and the warning,
The thunder and hail,

Of the flash from the cloud,
And the flight through the air—
And the red star that bade
The Lord Hatton beware.
And I presently challenge
The scribes of the nation
To furnish in fiction
A stranger narration.
There's a moral beside—
Had the beam fallen flat,
Or Miss Anne not possessed
More life than a cat,
Then I that have fashioned
This marvellous lay
Of the gallant Lord Hatton
Had never seen day ;
And the public had lost
Some amusement and wit,
And as rattling a ballad
As ever was writ ?”

By way of note, it is worthy of mention that fifteen days after the above narrated occurrence, a day of fasting and prayer was held by order of the Court, so great was the effect produced upon the country by the Castle Cornet catastrophe. Thomas Dicey, the historian, moralizing on the same, winds up with the following quaint observation, which will worthily close this narrative :—“By the same Almighty Power are the whole race of mankind, in every spot of the creation, alike liable to be cut off in an instant, or miraculously preserved (as we very lately have been in London, Northampton, and many other parts of this kingdom), by the same Omnipotent hand, in the midst of our pleasures and worldly pursuits.”



Rushton.

“Shouts rent the skies ; the stalwart heir
Of these possessions wide,
Led slowly through the tenant line,
A fair and dowered bride.

* * * * *

Loud joy-bells, echoing on the breeze,
Proclaimed that service done
Which joins for aye, ‘till death shall part,’
Two youthful lives in one.

* * * * *

His broad lands to a stranger passed,
Men mocked his sullied fame ;
His race died out, and now the earth
No longer knows his name.”



O Northamptonians no place within the county boundaries is, perhaps, better known than Rushton, with its magnificent hall of mingled Italian and Gothic architecture ; its charming grounds and gardens, ever ungrudgingly thrown open to the enjoyment of those who cannot yet sit, even metaphorically, under their “own vine and fig-tree ;” and its quaint Triangular Lodge, that has been the wonder and admiration of several generations, partly from its enigmatical character, and partly from its supposed connection with that most daring of conspiracies aiming at the overthrow of our Constitution, the Gunpowder Plot. What more likely place

for the home of legend ! The lone lodge, supposed to have been connected with the hall by an underground passage, used as a rendezvous for conspirators, and the secret shrine of a confession which had long been hardly tolerated—could imagination and superstition combined hit upon a spot better suited for a brooding place of weird fancy ? The hall, the home of all that was gay, chivalrous, and beautiful ; the cloister of mystic, dreamer, and plotter ; the favourite haunt of lovers of the beautiful in nature and art : one feels that poems may have been conceived, lived, or made here. And, if tradition is to be trusted, one celebrated poem at least was written at Rushton ; for it is said that Dryden, who enjoyed the friendship of the then owner of Rushton Hall, passed much of his time on the banks of the tiny Ise, and that he here wrote his “Hind and Panther,” as well as several other poems ; and in one of the walks there is an urn which was erected to his memory. The Triangular Lodge is, in itself, indeed, a sort of poem in stone ; the *motif* of which is held to be the eternal significance of trinity in unity.

But it is not of the poetic Treshams, the high-minded, the unfortunate, who built lodge and hall, the last of whom, Francis, only escaped death on the block, for his supposed complicity in the plot to blow up “King and Parliament,” by dying in the Tower. It is not of these we would speak, but of some who came after them.

Soon after the death of Francis Tresham, which took place in 1619, the Rushton estate was bought by Sir William Cokayne, at that time Lord Mayor of London, a scion of the ancient family of Cokayne, of Ashbourne, in Derbyshire. His son Charles was created Viscount Cullen, in Ireland, in the year 1642, and his father and he made additions, or put finishing touches to the noble hall of Rushton, as appears from their arms being mingled with

those of the Treshams. Bryan, the second Lord Cullen, was not of a character at all calculated to build up houses, but rather of one to pull them down. He was of a gay, pleasure-loving, spendthrift disposition, and seems early to have contracted the vices that too often thrive in such soil. In his sixteenth year he was betrothed to Elizabeth Trentham, who was some four years younger than himself. The marriage, however, was not consummated for some years afterwards, the young lord, meanwhile, making the grand tour of the Continent, to improve his mind and finish his education. This more serious occupation, he seems, while in Italy—then the great centre of culture and intellect—to have seasoned by a flirtation—to call it by no stronger name—with a young Italian lady. She took his attentions, however meant, in serious part, and returned his short-lived, or feigned, affection with all the ardour of her native land.

But soon the time came for Lord Bryan to return, and then the poor lady, said to have been a princess, and of surpassing beauty, left utterly desolate, resolved to follow her false lover. We may well fancy how, when she arrived in England, and heard that the one who had so lightly won her young affections had long been betrothed, and now returned to claim his bride, her love turned to hate, and she resolved, true to the spirit of her race, to be avenged on the perfidious man. The day arrived for the bridal, and holiday and revelry were the order of the day at Rushton. There was a resplendent gathering at the hall, where the shire was represented by “her beauty and her chivalry ;” but

“Proudest of that proud assembly
Were the bridegroom and the bride.”

The latter was the only child of Francis Trentham, Esq.,

son and heir of Sir Thomas Trentham, of Rocester Priory, in North Staffordshire, and his wife Prudence, the daughter of Thomas Eyre, of Hassop, Derby. She was noted for her comeliness, and was generally called "the beautiful Lady Cullen." Never had she looked so fair as now, when seated at the banquet table by the side of her youthful lord, the two being the cynosure of all eyes. Well might they be envied their proud position; all earth's happiness seemed within their grasp. All the wit and beauty around them was gathered to do honour to them, and a glittering assembly it was.

"Soft silver peals of laughter shrill
 Rang on the perfumed air,
 Commingling with the deep low tones
 Of youthful nobles there;

In stars of splendid beauty gleamed
 Rare jewels, proudly set
 On snow-white arm—on lofty brow—
 In regal coronet.

* * * * *

The fair bride blushed at words of love
 From her young husband—king,
 Deep whispered ever and anon
 When none were listening."

But upon all this gaiety and happiness there was suddenly cast a strange gloom. Bride and bridesmaid shuddered and turned pale; young and old were awed, while the whilom radiant bridegroom started and stared aghast. What had happened?

"— up the vaulted hall
 A veiled figure stole
 In bridal white, all noiselessly,
 Like some released soul."

It was the Italian maiden whom Lord Cullen had betrayed.

No wonder he trembled, for he knew not whether the well-known form and features were those of a mortal maiden or of a "blessed ghost." The ballad already quoted from says:—

" Her large dark eyes with frenzy flashed
A mingled rage and grief,
Her hands close locked together sought
In vain her soul's relief."

The legend goes on to say that the fair lady advanced to the chief table, and after upbraiding her lover with his perfidy, raised a gold chalice from the board as if to drink the health of the newly-wedded pair, but drank instead to their endless misery, and dashed the goblet to the ground, as though to give more emphasis to her imprecation. She then knelt down and solemnly invoked the vengeance of heaven on the bridegroom for his treachery, and ended by prophesying that the bride would "live in wretchedness and die in want."

" ' False love ! may misery,' she cried,
' Pursue thy bride and thee,
And thy black perjured soul 'fore heaven
Be witness aye for me ! ' "

Having thus spoken, the mysterious visitor rose and left the banquetting hall. The entire scene had occupied but a few moments, and now as host and guest stood gazing at each other in dismay, they seemed to question whether they had seen something real, or had been the victims of a simulacrum. That the vision had appeared before them, and had spoken in audible voice, none could doubt; but there were those among the assembly who, to the end of their days, imagined that they had seen one from the world of spirits. Some afterwards said that on the disappearance of the vision they heard the noise of wheels moving away, and footmen who were about the portico-

ward asserted that a strange lady, dressed all in white, drove up in a coach with six horses, and afterwards rode away in the same, though other of the servants who had not seen the carriage laughed at their credulity. The lady was never seen nor heard of again. Strangely enough, however, her malediction was in a great measure fulfilled ;

“ And though forgotten was the maid,
Fulfilled was her prayer,”

says the ballad.

The marriage turned out a very unhappy one, in consequence of the dissipation of the husband, and the extravagance of the wife. Their rent roll was said at one time to amount to eight thousand pounds a year—an enormous sum in those days ; but on the death of Lord Cullen, in 1687, his estates were mortgaged to nearly their full value. Lady Cullen, too, was constrained to part with her paternal estates in Staffordshire, and later, also, other properties she had inherited in Essex and elsewhere.

Lady Cullen was one of the ladies of the bed-chamber of Queen Catharine, and her beauty was the theme of much fulsome adulatory versification by the wits of Charles II.'s Court. She frequently, it is said, gave the Duke of Monmouth asylum at Rushton during the years 1682 and 1683, when he was in disgrace with his father, and the room he occupied is still called the duke's room. The duke afterwards presented his protector with a portrait of himself, by Sir Peter Lely, which is still in existence, Lady Cullen survived her husband twenty-five years, dying—the tradition says almost in want—in the year 1713, at Kettering. Her remains were buried in St. Peter's Church, Rushton, whence her monumental slab was

subsequently removed to All Saints', on the ruin of the former.

The Rushton estates remained in the Cullen family for several generations longer, until, indeed, the name died out with the fourth viscount from the Lord Bryan of our story ; so that in truth, in the words of the ballad,

“ The earth no longer knows his name.”

Rushton Hall was then bought by William Hope, Esq., of Amsterdam, from whom it passed, by purchase, into the hands of the present owners.

The following verses were written on the occasion of a visit to Rushton, and, as they are not much known, no apology is needed in giving them entire :—

A LEGEND OF RUSHTON.

“ Feast and mirth were high in Rushton,
Gladness reigned in cot and hall ;
Never was such joyance seen there
'Mid the people great and small.

Gay the mansion gleamed : and round it
Shone the woodlands light as day ;
Till the wild birds as 'twere morning
'Gan to sing their roundelay.

In the banquet chamber gathered
Were the foremost of the land—
Or for wit, or wealth, or beauty,
'Twas a fair and gallant band.

Proudest of that proud assembly
Were the bridegroom and the bride—
Bryan, lord of Rushton,—Lisbeth
Trentham's heiress, hope, and pride.

Ladies' eyes danced o'er with pleasure,
Manly brows shone bright with joy—
Seemed as though the tone of gladness
Never had so small alloy.

But what ails the noble bridegroom ?
Why hath he such looks of care ?
While others laugh with ringing laughter
Wherefore sits he gloomy there ?

Thinks he of that dark-haired maiden
Whom he met 'neath southern skies ?—
Whom he falsely wooed, and, winning,
Left alone to tears and sighs ?

Clearly something hath distraught him :
See, he starts ! 'Twas but the wind
Rushing through the tangled woodland—
Why should that affright his mind ?

But, behold !—what apparition
Stands there fronting Rushton's lord ?
'Tis the dark Italian maiden
Whom he feigned that he adored.

Like a woesome spectre seems she,
Sunken are her marble cheeks :
Hollow is her voice, and ghastly,
As she opes her lips and speaks :

' Bryan, lord of Rushton,' said she—
And she took a goblet up—
' Thou art perjured ; for thy falsehood
Thou of woe shall deeply sup.

' Fair thy bride is, fair thy fortune
As may in this isle be found ;
But a misery deep and lasting
Shall attend your life's long round.'

Saying this, the lady drank, while
All the guests stood there aghast—
Drank and vanished, and none ever
Knew where that weird maiden passed.

And 'twas said in after years
Sadly was her curse fulfilled—
Woe to woe succeeded quickly,
Till each seed of joy was killed."



RICHARD WAGNER'S WORKS.

ESSAYS AND TRANSLATIONS

BY

JOHN P. JACKSON.

Author of "The Album of the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau," etc., etc.

Lohengrin,

MUSICALLY AND PICTORIALY ILLUSTRATED.

The Legend and Poem written and translated by JOHN P. JACKSON. The Musical Gems of the Opera arranged for Voice and Piano by FRANCES MANETTE JACKSON.

Royal quarto, beautifully illustrated, price 2s. 6d.

MUSICAL SELECTIONS.

(With the English Words, as sung by the Carl Rosa Opera Company.)

ACT I.—THE PRELUDE TO THE OPERA (for Pianoforte).

ELSA'S DREAM, "Lonely, my lot deploring," &c.

THE COMING OF LOHENGRIN (Piano).

"My thanks to thee, Beloved Swan."

KING HENRY'S INVOCATION, "My Lord and God."

ACT II.—ELSA'S SONG TO THE NIGHT, "Ye gentle zephyrs, knowing,"

ELSA'S ADMONITION TO ORTRUD, "Oh, poorest."

ELSA'S PROCESSION TO THE MINSTER, "Make way! Make way! For Elsa of Brabant!"

LOHENGRIN AND ELSA ENTER THE MINSTER.

ACT III.—PRELUDE: THE BRIDAL MARCH (Piano).

THE BRIDAL CHORUS, "Faithful led."

DUET: LOHENGRIN AND ELSA, "Lohengrin: The Song's sweet tone expires."

"Lohengrin: Our hearts were ever."

"Elsa: Yea, long ago I saw thee."

"Lohengrin: Breakest thou not with me."

"Lohengrin: Doubtest thou still."

KING HENRY'S CALL TO ARMS, "Have thanks."

LOHENGRIN'S NARRATIVE, "In distant lands."

LOHENGRIN'S FAREWELL, "Beloved Swan."

"Oh, Elsa, but one year with thee I yearnèd."

LOHENGRIN'S DEPARTURE, "Behold, the heir."

Opinions of the Press.

Athenæum.—"The book gives so adequate an idea of Wagner's work that we hope Mr. Jackson will continue the series, and give us the rest of Wagner's music dramas in a similar form. Nothing can be better adapted to popularize the knowledge of Wagner's music in this country."

Pall Mall Gazette.—"The body of the book consists of the translation of the poem into powerful English, interspersed with musical extracts, comprising all the leading melodies for voice and pianoforte. It will be useful alike as a guide to and a memorandum of the beauties of Wagner's most sympathetic opera."

Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News.—"Many engravings illustrate the work, and much of the exquisitely beautiful music with which the German composer has enriched his *chef d'œuvre* is here."

The Penny Illustrated.—"Just the gift-book for any young lady musically inclined."

RICHARD WAGNER'S WORKS—*continued.*

Tannhauser. Translation of the Opera, with an Essay on the Legend, and Musical Selections for Voice and Piano.—1. The Tannhäuser March. 2. Elizabeth's Greeting to the Hall of Song. 3. Wolfram's Song to the Evening Star. Small quarto, price 1s. 6d.

The Flying Dutchman. Poem, with an Introductory Essay on the Legend, and Musical Extracts, for Piano. Price 1s. 6d.

Rienzi. With Introduction and Vocal Gems (with pianoforte accompaniment) of the Opera. Price 1s. 6d.

The Ring of the Nibelung. An Illustrated Descriptive Handbook of the Four Operas—*RHINEGOLD, THE VALKYR, SIEGFRIED, GÖTTERDAEMERUNG.* Price 2s.

WORKS BY JOHN P. JACKSON.

The Ober-Ammergau Passion Play (1880). Fourth Edition. Illustrated. Giving the Origin of the Play, the History of the Village and People, a full description of the Scenes and Tableaux of the Seventeen Acts of the Drama, and the Songs of the Chorus in German and English. Price 2s. 6d.

The Seven Death Sins. Poem, by ROBERT HAMERLING, author of *Ahasuerus in Rome, Der König von Sion, &c.*, being the text of a Musical Allegory, by ADALBERT VON GOLDSCHMIDT. Price 1s. 6d.

A German Luther Festival. Illustrated. By J. P. JACKSON, author of "Richard Wagner's Ring of the Nibelung: an Illustrated Handbook," "The Ober-Ammergau Passion Play," etc. Very interesting and amusing. Price 1s.

All the above works will be sent free by post on receipt of the price by

A. T. STORY, 9, Imperial Buildings,
Ludgate Circus, London.

WORKS PUBLISHED BY L. N. FOWLER.

Woman in the Talmud. Being a Sketch of the Position held by Women in the old Jewish days, before the Christian era. By A. T. STORY. Price 6d.

Nora: The Lost and Redeemed. A Temperance Tale. By Mrs. LYDIA F. FOWLER. Sixth thousand. Replete with thought, observation, instruction, and amusement. Cloth, 1s. 6d.; handsome cloth, 2s. 6d.

Ye Palaverment of Birds. A Satire on the Oaths Question. By SYLVANUS SATYR. "The author of this small work has displayed a great amount of skill and ingenuity in placing in rhyme a full description of the recent struggle which has been going on in the House of Commons with regard to the Oaths question. The chief actor in 'Palaverment of Birds' is very fitly described as the Jackdaw, while other birds, with their natural instincts shown, portray in a satirical manner many leading individuals that can be easily detected. The author says in opening: 'Twill please the children if it do no more'; but we think it will please some hundreds of children of a larger growth that have been interested and are interested in the Bradlaugh struggle."—*The Middlesboro' News.* Price 6d., post free 7d.

London: L. N. FOWLER, Imperial Buildings, Ludgate Circus, E.C.

57



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

JUL 17 1954

REC'D LD URL

LD
URL NOV 18 1975

NOV 17 1975

DISCHARGE URL

JUL 21 1981

JUL 23 1981

orm L9-42m-8,'49 (B5573)444

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

3 1158 00706 2903

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 400 930 4

